

THE  
Standing Use  
OF THE  
**SCRIPTURE,**  
TO ALL THE  
*Purposes of a Divine Revelation.*

And more particularly,  
To *Patience, Comfort, and Hope.*  
WITH THE  
Method, Wisdom, and Advantage of understanding it, and giving it due Entertainment.

In several **SERMONS**  
ON  
**ROM. xv. 4. and COL. iii. 16.**

By **JOHN GUYSE**, Minister  
of the Gospel.

*Thy Testimonies have I taken as an Heritage for ever;  
for they are the Rejoicing of my Heart, Psal. 119. 111.*

L O N D O N,  
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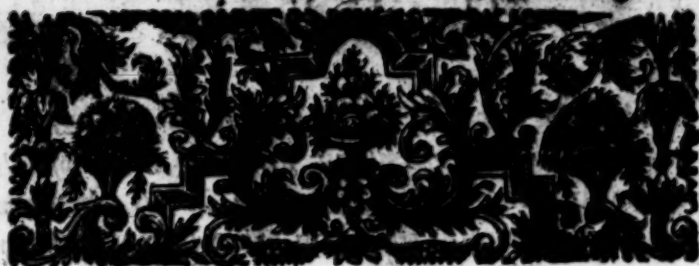


THE  
STANDING  
OF THE  
SECRETARY  
TO THE  
PURPOSES OF A DURING RECEPTION  
TO THE  
METHOD OF THE  
IN SEVERAL  
ROM. XV. 4. and Col. iii. 16.  
BY JOHN GUYST, Minister  
of the Gospel.



The Right Honourable I take it as an Honour for every  
for the most Rejoicing of my Heart, Phil. iii. 11.

LONDON  
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and R. Clapham for the Booksellers in the Strand, 1774.



TO THE  
CHURCH of CHRIST,  
AND ALL

That usually attend on my Ministry  
at Hertford.

**W**HEN I first composed these Discourses I had no Design of publishing them any farther than from the Pulpit. But the urgent Desires of some of You, to have them committed to the Press; a Sense of the direct Subserviency of their principal Subjects to all the great Purposes of Religion, which sets them before my Mind as unquestionably worthy of the most serious Consideration; and an Apprehension that some of them have been too sparingly treated of, and others hardly at all, have at length prevailed upon me to gratify a farther Aim at publick Service, if God shall please to own these weak Endeavours.

## The Dedication.

*AND I now inscribe them to You all, that I may not only give You an abiding Proof of the distinguishing Share You have in my Affection, and in my Concern, that You, in a special Manner, may abound in all Scriptural Knowledge, Patience, Comfort, and Hope to eternal Salvation: But that I may likewise keep up some lively Apprehensions in Your Minds, that the small Talents, it has pleased God to intrust me with, are peculiarly designed for Your Service; and that You, of all others, ought especially to think Your selves concerned to profit by these, and all my other Labours, so far as they are according to his Will, as You would answer it at the great Day of Christ.*

*THE grand Views I have in these Sermons are to perswade You to look on the Holy Scripture as Your **Property and Treasure**, prepared and suited by the Wisdom, Grace, and Authority of God, to all the Circumstances that attend You severally, to recommend it to Your Study and Choice; to put You into the best Method I can of understanding and improving it to Your own Advantage, and of judging for Your selves whether what You hear, or read from me or others, be according to it or no; and to attempt all these in such an applying Manner, that while You see its glorious Light, You may likewise feel its divine Impression; and may take all Your Religion from it; or, that Your Faith, Hope, and Worship, with the whole Compass of Your Principles, Temper, and Behaviour, toward God, toward one another, and toward all Men, may be*  
Eph. 2. 20. *built on this Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner Stone.*

## The Dedication.

*I F therefore You carefully read and observe what I now put into Your Hands, and the blessed Spirit shall please to succeed my Design in it, 'twill cut You out Work for more and better Reading still. It will make Your Bibles Your Delight, and put You upon reading them daily, with Diligence, Observation, and Desire to know the Truth, with all its vital Powers, as it is in Jesus. And if this great End is gained upon You by it, I shall reckon it an ample Reward for all the Pains I have taken in it.*

*THIS brings to my Mind a generous Wish of Luther, viz. "That all his Books of Devotion were burned, when he perceived that the People's Fondness and Veneration for them produced a Neglect of the Study of the Bible." Though I think there can be no Danger of my poor Performances being such a Snare to any; yet, was there any Danger of it, I so heartily approve of the noble Spirit of Protestantism and Christianity, which breaths in that Expression, that, as far as I know my self, I should much rather chuse to have any Thing of mine stifled in the Birth, than that it should produce an Effect, so dishonourable to the Word of God, so injurious to Your Souls, and so directly contrary to the governing Design of these Sermons. And I am sure, that the Hopes of engaging Your highest Regards to that Word, are some of the most pleasing Thoughts, that carried me through this Attempt to recommend it.*

*THE sacred Volume is a Book that you may be always learning from, and improving by: And the more You are conversant with it, enlightened, influenced, and determined by it, the better Christians You will be. O, may the Father of Spirits incline our Hearts to his Testimonies, and write Psal. 119.  
them 36.*



## The Dedication.

them in our inward Parts, that we may never depart from him !

*HAD I published these Discourses out of the Form of Sermons, some of their Parts might have been more methodically and advantagiously joined together, which an Attention to the natural Guidance of my Texts has obliged me to place at some Distance from each other. But, considering they could not be put into such a Form, without either bringing in some Things too abruptly, which would have been as great an Impropriety in Method; or leaving them out, when Your Expectations or Advantage might have made it requisite to insert them, I have thought it preferable to let them appear in the Order, in which they were first delivered: And by the Help of the Running Titles at the Top of every Page, any one, that would vary the Order in reading, may easily chuse another, as he thinks may be most convenient.*

*IN transcribing them for the Press some new Thoughts occurred to my Mind, which I have taken the Liberty to interweave in their proper Places. And because this swell'd the Sermons to a much larger Compass than when they were preached, I chose to obviate the Inconvenience of their Length, by increasing their Number, they being now Eleven, whereas in Preaching they were but Nine. And to prevent any Tedioufness that may arise from the remaining Length of any, as they now stand, to some, who in that Case, would willingly break off reading, where there is a proper Pause, I have flung most of them into Two Parts, and one of them into Three, as the Nature of the Discourses allowed me. This will naturally lead You to expect less of the Practical in some of the former Parts than in the latter; and if it should sometimes so fall out, I*  
per-

## The Dedication.

perswade my self You'll readily excuse it, considering that 'tis but Part of a Sermon, and that You may possibly meet with more of that Kind in the Remainder of it. The Running Titles may likewise be of Service to direct You to such Discourses, or to such Parts of every Discourse, as may be supposed to be most adapted to that Purpose.

I WILLINGLY lay hold on this Occasion to express the Pleasure I have in grateful Reflections on the Grace of God, by which I have hitherto ministered his Gospel in Peace, and with encouraging Success among You; and on the many engaging Proofs You have given me of Your Affection and Respect. You will also allow me to say, that I esteem you as a dear Charge committed to me, and greatly long after you all Phil. 1. 8. in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, to see you fil-Col. 1. 9, led with the Knowledge of his Will, in all<sup>10</sup>. Wisdom and spiritual Understanding — fruitful in every good Work; zealously af-Gal 4. 18. fected always in a good Thing; endeavouring Eph. 4. 3. to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace; manifestly declared to be the li-<sup>2</sup> Cor. 3. ving Epistle of Christ, ministered by me,<sup>3</sup> and others of his Servants, labouring at any Time among You, written not with Ink; but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in the fleshly Tables of the Heart; and so our Hope, and Joy, and 1 Thes. 2. Crown of Rejoicing, in the Presence of our<sup>19, 20</sup>. Lord Jesus Christ at his Coming; as, blessed be his Name, many of You already are our Glory and Joy.

WITH these Reflections and Desires, I com-Acts 20. mend You to God, and to the Word of his<sup>32</sup>. Grace, which is able to build You up; and

# The Dedication.

to give You an Inheritance among all them  
which are sanctified. *And, in return, I earnestly  
beg the Continuance of Your Prayers, that I may  
be yet more abundantly furnished for, assisted,  
and succeeded in his Work, not as having Do-  
minion over Your Faith; but as a Helper of  
Your Joy, which is the highest Ambition of*

2 Cor. 1.  
24.

Your affectionate Servant

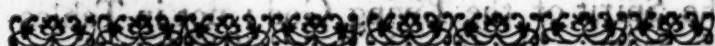
for JESUS's Sake,

JOHN GUYSE.

HERTFORD,

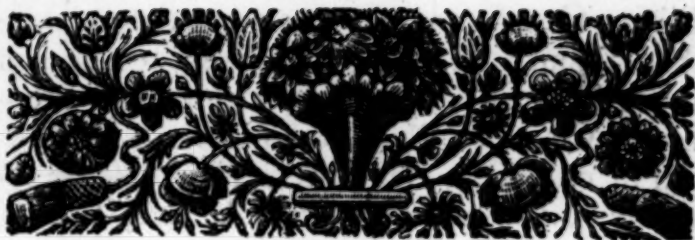
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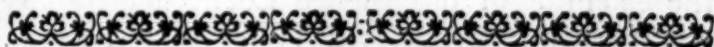


## Principal ERRATA necessary to be corrected.

Page 4. l. 12. f. their r. us. p. 9. l. 21. after Assistance add from the Old Testament.  
p. 10. l. 14. f. a standing Part of r. of standing Use in. p. 37. l. 17. r. full as.  
p. 40. l. 4. a fin. r. to which. p. 68. antepen. r. Scripture hath. p. 68. l. 32. r. Inter-  
mix. p. 123. l. 4. a fin. r. that when. p. 149. antepen. r. review. p. 150. l. 18. f. they  
r. others. p. 170. ult. r. Let. p. 177. l. 32. f. Interpretation r. Apparition. p. 184.  
l. 32. f. are generally allow'd r. appear from the Antients. p. 184. l. 4. & p. 269.  
l. 24. r. these. p. 169. l. 19. r. of Moses. p. 203. l. 1. f. the r. your. p. 215. l. 3.  
r. stand. p. 233. l. 6. f. Effect, r. Event. p. 244. l. 23. f. this r. the. p. 275. l. 17.  
& p. 276. l. 21. r. these.  
In the Running Titles. p. 37. & 37. f. D. Authority r. standing Usefulness.  
p. 80. f. Genealogies r. Chronology. p. 170. after Scripture date the. p. 261. f. im-  
proving r. understanding. p. 263. f. understanding r. improving.



# SERMON I.



ROM. xv. 4.

*For whatsoever Things were written  
aforetime, were written for our  
Learning; that we through Pati-  
ence and Comfort of the Scriptures  
might have Hope.*



THE Holy Scriptures are such SERM. I.  
an inestimable Treasure of  
Truth and Goodness, so Ex-  
cellent and Divine, that we  
can never be too conversant  
with them, or sufficiently  
thankful for them; nor can  
we ever exhaust them, or out-live our Need  
of them. They are a bright Display of the  
Glory of God in its most harmonious and  
transforming Beauties, and a rich Present to  
B the



**SERM. I.** the fallen Creatures of our World, to restore Light, Grace, and Peace among them, while they sojourn here, and to open a new and living Way to the heavenly Mansions of Eternity. Or, according to the inspired Encomium in our Text, They were *all written for our Learning, that we might have Patience, Comfort, and Hope.*

THE Apostle begins this Chapter with a  
 Ver. 1, 2. Direction to the Strong to bear the Infirmities of the Weak, and to seek their Good to Edification. To enforce this Duty upon them, he alledges the Example of our Blessed Lord, and quotes a Scripture from the Old Testament, to shew, That what he alledg'd was true concerning Him. For even Christ pleased not Himself; but as it is written, *The Reproaches of them that reproached thee fell on me.*

Ver. 3. THIS Quotation is made from *Psal. 69. 9.* *The Zeal of thine House hath eaten me up; and the Reproaches of them that reproached thee, are fallen upon me.* The Contents of which Psalm the Jews themselves apprehended (as the Learned observe) were to be accomplished in the Days of the Messiah. And the 21st Verse is expressly said, in the New Testament, to be fulfill'd in Christ, *John 19. 28, 29.* The former Part of the 9th Verse is likewise apply'd to him in *John 2. 17.* and the latter Part of that Verse is apply'd to him by our Apostle in the fore-mentioned Words, which immediately precede our Text.

AND to shew, that what David said with respect to Christ concerns us, carries useful Instruction to us, should have its Weight with us, and may be improv'd to our Advantage, he turns it into an Argument for our Encouragement, in the Words of our Text; For

*what-*

## of the Scriptures.

3

whatsoever Things were written afore-time, were written for our Learning; that we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures might have Hope, q. d. " Both this, and all Things else, that were formerly written in the Scriptures of the Old Testament, by the Direction, and under the Inspiration of the Holy Ghost, were written for our Instruction, or to teach us, who live in Gospel-Days, that we, by means of those Scriptures, might have Patience and Consolation in all our Trials and Sufferings, and so might be wrought up to a blessed Hope of an approaching State of undisturbed Peace and immortal Pleasures.

SERM. I.

THE Scriptures here immediately intended are those of the *Old Testament*, for a Quotation from thence introduced this Account of them, and they are expressly said to be written *afore-time*, which can't but refer to those antient Writings, rather than to any of the *New*; for at that Time but little of the *New Testament* was committed to Writing, and the earliest Parts of the little were but of few Years date; nor were they, till a considerable Time afterwards, collected together for the common Use of the Church. But what the Apostle here speaks of the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*, is, by the Reason of Things, and by the general Consent of *Christians*, equally applicable to the *New*. We may say of the *whole Divine Revelation* in the Bible now, as he did of the *Old Testament* then, *Whatsoever Things were written afore-time, were written for our Learning, &c.*

I SHALL therefore consider our Text as a Proposition that holds true with respect to the whole Scripture, both of the *Old* and *New Testament*. And there are two principal Parts

## Proofs of the standing Use

**SERM. I.** in it, which, by God's Assistance, I would speak to.

*First, THE standing Use of the Scriptures to the Christian Church in all Ages. They were written for our Learning.*

*Secondly, THE Purposes for which they are of that standing Use, viz. That we through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures may have Hope.*

*First, LET us consider the standing Use of the Scriptures to the Christian Church in all Ages, as they were written for their Learning.*

*IN doing this I shall aim at two Things, with some practical Improvements.*

*I. TO shew, That they are of this standing Use. And,*

*II. CONSIDER, What Use we may make of them, though they were mostly written on special Occasions, or with an immediate Relation to some particular Persons or Societies. I am,*

*I. TO shew, That the Scriptures are of standing Use to the Christian Church in all Ages.*

*THEY are the Rule of Faith and Practice now, as well as when they were first written. They were not dictated by the Spirit of God, and committed to Writing, only for the Use of some particular Persons or Churches in some particular Ages, or in that Age wherein the Apostles lived, when for that Reason there was less need of them than now; but for all the Churches of Christ, and for all that shall receive and entertain them by Faith in all Ages.*

**THIS**

THIS I shall endeavour to evince to you in SERM. I.  
the following Manner.

I. FROM the Scripture's Intimations concerning it self.

THE Nature of my present Design supposes an Acknowledgment of the *Divine Authority* of the Scripture, or that God did once give it for some use to his Church; and therefore what it witnesseth concerning the *Continuance* of its Use must be admitted as proper Evidence in the Case. For allowing this Authority, nothing can be more just or equal, than to let it speak for it self: Nor can any Thing be a surer Rule of judging of its Design, than what it self suggests concerning it. Now we have many Intimations in the Scripture it self, that it was design'd for an extensive and *lasting* Advantage. This appears from what it says with respect both to the *Old* and *New Testaments*.

(I.) WITH Respect to the *Old Testament*, we are assur'd, that *that* was written for the Use of the Christian Church.

THOUGH Christ justly reproached the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, for their both sly and daring Iniquity, in putting magisterial, forced Constructions on the Word of God, and imposing them, with their own Traditions, to make it void: Yet he never charg'd them with making any Alteration in the Text it self, nor gave the least Intimation, that on his Coming it was to be laid aside, as of no farther Service. And though the Apostles frequently declar'd the antient Rites and Ceremonies, and the whole Frame of Judaick Worship to be abolish'd by the Coming of Christ, and call'd off their Converts from trusting in *Moses's* Law, or seeking Justification by the



**SERM. I.** Works of it: Yet they never cast the least Slight on the *Old Testament* Scriptures; but always spoke of them, recommended, and used them with the greatest Esteem and Veneration, and to rich Advantage.

**Mat. 5. 17.** OUR Blessed Lord declar'd, that *he came not to destroy the Law and the Prophets; but to fulfill them.* As he came to fulfill the Law, and the Predictions of the Prophets, by his Obedience and Sufferings; so he came to *explain and inculcate* the Law, and the Doctrine of the Prophets with the greatest Advantage, and to set them in the strongest and most engaging Light, by his Preaching.

HE made use of the *Old Testament* Writings to direct and assist his own Conduct in his Encounters with the Devil. All the Arguments with which he resisted his Temptations in the Wilderness, were taken from those Scriptures.

**Mat. 4. 3,** To the Temptation to *command the Stones to be made Bread*, Christ answer'd from *Deut. 8. 3.* *It is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone; but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth*

**Ver. 5, 6, 7.** *of God.* To the Temptation, to cast himself down from the Pinnacle of the Temple, he answer'd from *Deut. 6. 16.* *It is written, Thou shalt not*

**Ver. 9, 10.** *tempt the Lord thy God.* And, to the Temptation to fall down and worship the Devil, he answer'd from *Deut. 6. 13.* *It is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.*

He did not urge these Answers from the Reasons of Things, as he justly might; but laid the whole Stress on the *Divine Authority* of the Scriptures, because it was written so and so.

**Eph. 6. 17.** By this *Sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God*, he defeated and triumph'd over Satan in all his Assaults.

of the Scriptures.

7

SERM. I.

HE likewise quoted Scriptures from the Old Testament, open'd and apply'd them, on all proper Occasions, throughout his Ministry on Earth, to spread the Knowledge of Divine Things, to prove himself to be the Son of God, and to confute his most obstinate Adversaries. He recommended the Study of them to the *Jews*, saying, *Search the Scriptures.* And in his Conversation with his own Disciples, he mentioned *Moses*, the *Prophets*, and the *Psalms*; which take in all the Books of the Old Testament, according to the Division of them then known among the *Jews*; he mention'd these as authentick Records to be consulted in Gospel-Days, and so explain'd all those Scriptures in their Reference to himself. *Beginning at Moses, and all the Prophets,* he expounded unto them, in all the Scriptures, the Things concerning himself. — And he said to them, *These are the Words which I spake to you, while I was yet with you, that all Things must be fulfill'd which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning me.*

NOR is it without Reason, that a Mark of distinguishing Honour is left upon the *Bereans*, for their diligent Search into the *Old Testament*, Acts 17. 11. Or, that the Apostles so frequently recommend it to the *Gentile Converts* as well as the *Jews*.

AND it may be observ'd, That what our Text affirms, which concerns all the Writings of the Old Testament, is directed to a Church made up mostly of *Gentile Believers*. And that in the Close of this Epistle the Apostle speaks of the Revelation of the Will of God by the *Scriptures of the Prophets*, as made known, not to the *Jews*, or these *Gentiles only*, but to all

**SERM. I.** *Nations for the Obedience of Faith.* And in his Epistle to the *Ephesians*, another *Gentile Church*, he represents Believers as built upon the Foundation of the Apostles and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief Corner-Stone. So likewise in his Discourse to the *Corinthians*, another Church of the *Gentiles*, he reminds them, that the great Points of the Christian Faith, which he at first taught them, were according to the Scriptures. For I deliver'd unto you first of all, that which I also receiv'd, how that Christ died for our Sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the Third Day, according to the Scriptures. Whereby he manifestly established the Use of the antient Scriptures for the Assistance of their Faith and Hope, as to these saving Doctrines of the Gospel; unless we suppose him to refer to some of the *New Testament* Writings, which by that Time might be extant.

1 Cor. 15  
3, 4

AND this was his usual Way of teaching and confirming the Churches, constituted at least chiefly of *Gentile* Converts, who, we must suppose, from these Intimations, as well as from other Reasons, had Opportunities of consulting, or own'd the Divine Authority of those Scriptures. Otherwise it would have been incongruous to have referr'd the *Gentiles* to them for the Truth of the Doctrines he taught among them.

ACCORDINGLY, when he preach'd to mere *Pagans*, to bring them over to the Faith of Christ, I don't find that he made any mention of *Moses*, or the *Prophets*, to them. See at your Leisure, *Acts* 14. 11 ——— 18. and 16. 25 ——— 34. and 17. 18 ——— 32. and 19. 26, 27. and 28. 28 ——— 31. But when he spoke to any of the *Jews*, or *Gentile* Profelytes, who

who were acquainted with, and acknowledged SERM. I.  
the Divine Authority of the *Old Testament*, he  
ordinarily, in his first Applications to them,  
brought in Aid from thence to confirm, illu-  
strate, and enforce his Doctrine, as is obvi-  
ous to an attentive Reader throughout the *Acts*  
of the *Apostles*. And he roundly averr'd, That  
he said no other Things than those which the Pro- Acts 26.  
phets and Moses did say should come: That Christ 22, 23.  
should suffer, and that he should be the first that  
should rise from the Dead, and should shew Light  
unto the People, and to the Gentiles. Though  
when he had to do only with *Heathens*, he  
could sufficiently prove the Truth of the Chri-  
stian Religion, contain'd in the New Testament,  
from the Excellence of its Doctrines and Pre-  
cepts, and from the clear Attestations that  
were given to a crucify'd and risen Jesus, by  
numerous proper Witnesses, and undoubted  
Miracles, to confirm their Testimony: Yet  
he also found an additional Assistance to  
strengthen those Proofs, when he was to deal  
with such as own'd its Authority, and could  
compare its antient Prophecies with the im-  
portant Facts, that then appear'd with open  
Evidence, in many Instances, to be fulfill'd in  
Christ, as may hereafter be farther consi-  
der'd.

YEA, such was the Fulness of the Old Te-  
stament Writings, that speaking particularly  
of them, he pronounced, that they were able 2 Tim. 3.  
to make one wise to Salvation, through Faith which 15.  
is in Christ Jesus; and thereupon added, as may  
well be supposed, with respect to all the sacred  
Writings then extant, or about to be publish-  
ed, *All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God*, Ver. 16,  
and is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for 17.  
Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness: That  
the



**SERM. I.** *the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good Works.*

AND if the Apostle, as seems highly probable, intended the Book of *Psalms*, and other Scriptures adapted to the same Use, Eph. 5. 19. when he exhorted the *Ephesians* to *Speak to one another in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing, and making Melody in their Hearts to the Lord*: And the *Colossians*, to see that the *Word of Christ dwelt in them richly in all Wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and Spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in their Hearts to the Lord*. He thereby intimated, that those Scriptures should be a standing Part of the Worship of the *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*, and, that consequently the rest of the Scriptures, of which they were part, were to be of constant and abiding Use among them. Nor do I see what can render this Supposition improbable, since all the *Titles* he mentions were antiently given to some or other of those Divine Composures.

AT other Times we are expressly assur'd, that what was recorded in the *Old Testament* was written for our sakes, who live under the *New*: As particularly, when the Apostle mentions, from Gen. 15. 6. that *Abraham's Faith was imputed to him for Righteousness*, he adds, Now it Rom. 4. 22, 23, 24. *was not written for his sake alone, that it was imputed to him: But for us also, to whom it shall be imputed, if we believe on him that raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead*. A like Intimation is given of other Things, that they were written for our Admonition, 1 Cor. 10. 11. which, with more Instances of this Kind, will hereafter fall in our Way for farther Consideration.

To conclude this Head; as the Writings of the *Old Testament* are no where disparaged, by any

any lessening Reflection in the New ; but on the contrary, are often cited, and spoken of with Honour, as the *Word and Oracles of God*, this is at once a Confirmation and Approbation of them, and recommends them to our Use, as Scriptures by which we are to be taught, and by which our Faith and Practice, in many Instances, are still to be regulated. SERM. I.

THUS the *New Testament* applies the Scriptures of the *Old*, to the standing Use of the Christian Church, and shews, that their Divine Authority is still to be regarded, and that they are still to be used and improved for our spiritual Benefit. And as many of those Scriptures are *interpreted* and *apply'd* in the New Testament, we may now understand them with greater Clearness and Certainty, and see their well-proportion'd Beauties in more strong and lively Colours, than the *Jews* could before the Times of the Gospel.

(2.) WITH Respect to the *New Testament*, we are assur'd it was not written barely for the Use of any particular Churches, or of that Age only in which it was written ; but for the Use of the Churches of Christ in all Ages.

WE are *built on the Foundation of the Apostles*, Eph. 2. 20. as well as of the *Prophets*. And wheresoever their Doctrine concerning Christ is taught, that Foundation is laid for us to build by Faith upon it. And the clearer Manifestations of the Doctrine of Christ in the *Gospel*, as well as the scatter'd Hints of it in the *Prophets* of old, are to bring all Nations to the Obedience of Faith, Rom. 16. 25, 26.

WHEN Christ gave Commission to his Servants to preach the Gospel, they were to do do it where-ever they came. He said unto Mark 16. them, Go ye into all the World, and preach the <sup>15</sup> Gof-

**SER. I.** *Gospel to every Creature.* Their preaching or publishing the Gospel was by Writing as well as Speaking; and if their speaking was not to be confin'd to any Place, or to any particular Set of People, much less were their Writings to be so. For since that Gospel which they preach'd was to be continu'd to the End of the World, as may be gather'd from Christ's Commission and Promise, according to the most genuine, and constant Sense of the Phrase he uses to set out their Duration; *Go ye, and teach all Nations — to observe all Things whatsoever I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.* Since it was proper to have it published at first by Writing, as well as by Word of Mouth; and since there could be no other Way to be depended on, to hand down that Gospel to succeeding Ages, unless that of a continued Inspiration, of which we have not the least Evidence or Hint; either those Writings must be of this standing Use, or Christ's Design of continuing the Gospel to the End of the World be frustrated.

Eph. 4.  
S, 11.

Ver. 12.

— 13.

THE Apostle says, *When he ascended on high — He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers; some extraordinary, and others ordinary Officers in his Kingdom, as the State and Exigence of its Affairs might require, for the perfecting of the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for the Edifying of the Body of Christ.* And some of them were to be continued, *till we all come in the Unity of the Faith, and of the Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ.* This Appointment of Pastors and Teachers, for carrying on, and finishing Christ's Work on all

all the Members of his Body, is a plain Intimation that the Scriptures were design'd by his Wisdom and Grace, for the Instruction of the Church, as long as there is Room for its Edification and Enlargement in the World. For that which they are to preach is the *Word of God*, that their Hearers may have a Divine Warrant for their Faith, as the Apostle argues, *How shall they call on him, in whom they have not believ'd? And how shall they believe in him, of whom they have not heard?* Rom. 10. 14, 17.

So then, *Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.* And hence was his Charge to Timothy, *Preach the Word — for the Time will come when they will not endure sound Doctrine, but after their own Lusts shall they heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears, &c.* Tim. 4. 2, 3, 4. Now this Word is contain'd in the Scriptures alone.

AND that Christ design'd his Gospel to be publish'd, and continued in after Ages, is plain, from what he said of Mary's Act in anointing his Body for his Burial. *Wherefore ever this Gospel shall be preach'd in the whole World, there shall also this that this Woman hath done be told for a Memorial of her.* Mat. 26. 13. The Memorial of this is here recorded in the Scriptures; its being call'd a *Memorial* intimates, that it should be recorded to future Ages; and therefore Christ's saying it should be told, *Wheresoever this Gospel should be preach'd, or publish'd in the whole World*, shews that that Gospel was design'd for extensive, and standing Use to future Generations.

THE Apostle Paul gave Notice, that his Epistles were not to be confin'd to the Use of the particular Churches to which they were written; but to be of more extensive Service. He directed his Epistles to the *Corinthians* in such



**SEAM. I.** such a manner as shew'd that, though there were some Things in them which immediately related only to the particular Circumstances of that Church; yet that he would have them communicated to others for general Use. For the *First* is directed to the Church of God which is at Corinth, — with all that in every Place call upon the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord, both theirs and ours. And the *Second* to that Church, with all the Saints which are in all Achaia. And at the Conclusion of his Epistle to the Colossians, he order'd it to be communicated to the Church of Laodicea; and that another Epistle written from Laodicea (which is, as some think, his Epistle to the Ephesians) should be read by the Church at Coloss. This shews they were written for others besides those to whom they were immediately sent.

HE furthermore speaks of God's Design to display the Riches of his Mercy and Grace by Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, not only of the then present, but likewise of future Generations, or that IN AGES TO COME he might shew the exceeding Riches of his Grace, in his Kindness towards us through Christ Jesus. Accordingly, in the Conclusion of his Thoughts on that Glorious Subject, he expresses a solemn Adoration of God in Christ, as to be continued through all Generations, which shews, that the Scriptures were to be continued among them, to direct them in it, and oblige them to it. To him be Glory in the Church by Christ Jesus, throughout all Ages, or Generations, World without End. Amen.

IN another Epistle he tells us, This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the World to save Sinners, of whom (says he) I am chief. And hereupon he speaks

Speaks of himself as one, to whom *Jesus Christ* shewed forth all Long-suffering, for a Pattern to them that should thereafter believe on him to everlasting Life. This Pattern therefore was to be proposed to after Ages for their Encouragement. And the very mentioning *their* believing on Christ to Life everlasting, supposes the standing Use of the Gospel that was publish'd by his Disciples, as the Means of bringing them to that Faith in him; according to what our Lord himself intimated, when in his mediatorial Address to his Father he said, *Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their Word.* Joh. 17. 20.

AND the Apostle *Peter* takes Notice with Approbation, of the Apostle *Paul's* Epistles to Churches, chiefly form'd of *Gentile* Believers, and reckons them a part of the Scriptures, which ought to be regarded by all the *Jews* as well as *Gentiles*. Account, says he, that the Long-suffering of our Lord is Salvation, even as our beloved Brother *Paul* also, according to the Wisdom given unto him, hath written to you; as also in all his Epistles, speaking in them of these Things, in which [Things] are some Things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other Scriptures, to their own Destruction. This Sort of Language enjoin'd the believing *Jews*, where-ever they were, to look upon themselves as spoken to by the Apostle *Paul's* Epistles, as much as if they had been expressly address'd to them; and this gives an inspir'd Testimony to them as containing such Doctrines of Faith, as should be a Rule to all that come to the Knowledge of them.

THIS Epistle of *Peter*, and several others, are call'd *general Epistles*, because not directed to

**SERM. I.** to any particular Persons or Churches; and in one of them the Apostle *John*, speaking to the whole Community of Believers as such, says of the most comprehensive Summary of the Christian Faith, *This is the Record, that God hath given to us Eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not Life. These Things have I written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life, and that ye may believe on the Name of the Son of God.*

Finally, We have frequent Notice, as to many Things recorded in the *New Testament*, that they were design'd for the most extensive Use, without Confinement to any particular Persons or Ages. Sometimes this Notice is given by the *absolute and universal* Forms of the Expressions themselves: As when Christ says, *Where Two or Three are gathered together in my Name, there am I in the midst of them.* And Mark 13. *what I say unto you, I say unto all, Watch:* And when the Apostle says, *Whosoever believes on him shall not be ashamed.* And at other Times this is farther suggested, by adding to those Forms of Expression such Considerations as are of *abiding Truth* and Importance to enforce them: As when Christ says, *The Father judgeth no Man, but has committed all Judgment to the Son, that all Men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.* And when the Apostle says, *He is able to save them to the uttermost, that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make Intercession for them.* But 'twould be almost endless to recite the numerous Passages of these Sorts, which every one's Observation may furnish him with.

THUS

THUS the Scriptures give Evidence concerning themselves, both with respect to the *Old and New Testament*, that they are to be of standing Use to the Christian Church in all Ages. And so their extensive abiding Use is supported by all the Evidence we have of their Divine Authority. Upon the same Grounds that we believe them to be the Word of God, we are to receive them for our own Use, in Things pertaining to God and our own Soul's Salvation, as if we had lived in the Days wherein they were written, and had been the Persons to whom they were first directed. But this may be further argued from several other Considerations.

*The Second Part of Sermon I.*

2. **T**HE standing Use of the Scriptures may be gathered, *From the Practice of the Churches that immediately succeeded the Apostles Days.*

THEY constantly used the Holy Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, esteem'd them as their dearest Treasure; receiv'd them as the Rule of their Faith and Practice; read them publicly in their Assemblies; preach'd or commented upon them, propos'd and defended Doctrines of Faith, and confuted Errors by them: As any of the Learned, acquainted with their Writings, and some of them themselves, translated into *English*, may inform you.

SOME of the earliest Pastors and Churches, we have an Account of in *Ecclesiastical History*, were personally acquainted with one; or more of the Apostles themselves, and others with  
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their



**SEEM. I.** their *immediate* Disciples. They became *Christians* by the Doctrines contained in the Scriptures, which were recommended to them, and made effectual by the Power of God's Spirit; and as fast as they were satisfy'd of the Divine Authority of the *New Testament* Writings, or that its several Parts were written by those inspired Men, whose Names they bore; they made use of them, together with the *Law* and the *Prophets*, as they believed they had an undoubted Right to do, in their publick Assemblies, and on all other Occasions. And their Judgment and Practice in this well known and important Point was handed down in all the Churches of Christ from Age to Age, till the *Anti-Christian* Tyranny of *Rome* invaded the Peoples Rights, and wrested the Scriptures out of their Hands. But, blessed be God, the *Reformation* has restor'd them to us again.

3. A FURTHER Plea for the standing Use of the Scriptures may be made, *From their SUITABLENESS to us, as well as to those that lived in the Days wherein they were written.*

THE Relation of some of their Parts to the peculiar Times and Circumstances in which they were written, and the Use we may make of such Parts, is hereafter to be consider'd. It is sufficient for our present Purpose, that the *main Doctrines* of the Scripture are adapted, by the infinite Wisdom and Grace of God, not only to one Age, or to some particular Ages of the World; but to all Ages of Mankind, or to every State and Condition of fallen Creatures in every Age, since the Revelation has been made.

MANY *Eternal* Truths and Obligations of the greatest Moment are clearly manifested and enforced throughout the Scriptures, which

we

we should otherwise have been utter Strangers to, or at most have had but very uncertain and confused Conceptions of; and some others, that depended on *Sovereign Pleasure*, are of the same Concern to us, as ever they were to those that have gone before us. We need this Revelation from God as much as former Ages. We need it as much as they, to lead us into the Knowledge of the true God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost; of our only Mediator, and of our Selves. And, we need it as much as they, to assure us of the Resurrection of the Body, of the Future Judgment, and of the Eternal World of inexpressible Blessedness or Misery that lies before us.

ARE not our *Intellectual Powers* of the same Nature with theirs? And may it not then improve, regulate, and adorn *ours* as much as *theirs*? Will not the noblest Discoveries that entertain'd *their Understandings* yield the same Entertainment to *ours*? Will not what led *their Wills* to the Possession of the most satisfying Goodness, be as proper to lead *ours* to the same? Did *their Consciences* need it to shew them how they might be purg'd and pacify'd; and do not *ours*? Were *their Affections* to be set right, furnished with the most agreeable Objects, and influenced with the most powerful Motives by it; and may it not be of the same Advantage to *ours*? Did it direct *their Desires* to the chief Good, and shew how they might be satisfy'd; and can it not direct *ours* to the same Good, and the same Satisfaction? Was it suited to *their Hopes*, to shew what rich Futurities they should principally regard, and upon what Grounds they should rest, to be secur'd from Disappointments; and are not those Futurities as worthy of *ours*, and those

SEAM. I. Grounds sufficient to afford the same Satisfaction to *ours*? Could it present *their Love* with the most amiable Objects, and make them in love with them; and has Time render'd those Objects less lovely, that they can't have the same Effect on *us*? Is it not suited to make *our Joys* as regular, rational, pure, and constant as *theirs*? Are we less troubled with the *dolorous* and *irascible* Passions than *they* were, not to need it, as they did, either to prevent or restrain them, or to direct and improve them, and to give us a just Dominion over them?

DID *they* stand in need of the Scripture to convince them of their *guilty* State before God, to shew them how they came into it, and to discover the beautiful Method of his Grace in Christ for their Recovery from it; and do not *our guilty* Circumstances need the same Discoveries? Are we *less depraved* than they were, that we should not need it to convince us of our hideous Vileness and Loathsomeness by Nature, to awaken a Sense of the strong and multiply'd Reasons we have to be humble, and to give us a Sight of the Way for our Cleansing by the Merit of Christ's Blood, and the Efficacy of his Spirit, as *they* did? Would it not suit our *Ignorance*, and obviate our Mistakes, by discovering them to us, and enlightening our Minds in the Knowledge of Christ, and of the great Things of God that are display'd in him, to his Glory, and our own eternal Peace, as much as it did *theirs*? Are not we as *indolent* and *slothful* in our Spirits as they were? And did *they* want to be awaken'd and excited by it to the most diligent Enquiries into the State of their Souls, and about their eternal Welfare; and we not want it for the same Purpose? Did it serve *their weak and impotent* Circumstances,

by

by shewing them the Folly and Danger of Self-Confidence, by pointing them to their Only, and All-sufficient Help, and by becoming the Means of conveying Strength from Christ to them; and might it not be of the same Service to us under the same unhappy Circumstances? Was it adapted to the *Hardness, Obstinacy, Perwarseness, Prejudices, and Enmity* of their Souls against God, to melt, subdue, and reconcile them to him through the Lord Jesus; and are we exempted from any of those criminal Dispositions, that it should not suit us? Did it serve a valuable Purpose to them, in delineating before their View the *Pride* of their Hearts, with all its groundless Vanities, in all their shameful Colours, and turning it into an ingenuous Self-Abasement before God, under a Sense of all their Unworthiness and Deformity; and are we so humble, that it would not be needful to serve the same Purposes to us?

ARE not our *Dangers* as great and numerous as theirs were? And may not we learn from it the Way for our Escape as well as they? Could it succour them under all their *Temptations*, assist their Management of them, their Conflicts with, and Victory over them; and has it lost its Efficacy, that it can't afford us the same Succour and Assistance under ours? Was it a proper Relief to them under all their *Discouragements*? Did it help to embolden their humble Confidence toward God through Christ in Defiance of them? And may not we derive the same Relief, and humble Confidence from it, when we stand in the same need of them? Did it afford them seasonable Support and Comfort under every *Distress* of Soul or Body that befel them? Did it shew them God's wife,



**SERM. I.** holy, righteous, and gracious Ends in them, and teach them how to improve them to their spiritual Advantage, that they might reap the peaceable Fruits of Righteousness by them; and can any like Distress attend us, in which we may not find it of the same happy Consequence?

DID it instruct *them* how to live and act in every Relation to *this World*, and to all that they were concerned with in it, how to use it and not abuse it; how to behave in *social Life*, as Magistrates or Subjects, Husbands or Wives, Parents or Children, Masters or Servants, Brethren or Neighbours, Pastors or Church-Members, Ministers or Hearers, Persons agreeing or disagreeing in Principles, Temper, Profession, and Practice: How in *solitary Life*, with a Regard to their own personal Interest and Happiness; how to order *all the Parts* of their Conversation, that it might shine in the Beauties of Holiness, as might be most to the Glory of God, most to the Good of their Fellow-Christians and Fellow-Creatures, Friends or Enemies, most to their own Comfort and Advantage, and most becoming Human Nature; and are not the same Instructions equally capable of being as serviceable to *us* in all these Respects, as they were to them?

DID it direct *them* how to live and act in their Relation to the other World, that they might manage every Thing here with a Reference to the future Judgment, and its eternal Consequences? Did it open to them the glorious Prospects of a blessed Immortality, and recommend it to them? Did it shew them the Way of obtaining it, and animate their unwearied Pursuits after it in that Way? And if

## of the Scriptures.

23.

SERM. I.

we observe the same Directions and Representations, may they not have the same Influence on *us*, by the same Grace as they had on them? What just Reason can be assign'd, why *they* should reap these invaluable multiply'd Benefits propos'd in the Scriptures to them, and *we* be incapable of the same?

IN *fine*, Whatever our Circumstances are, as *rational* Creatures, as *fallen* Creatures, or as Creatures that have *immortal* Souls made for Eternity; as *Unbelievers* or *Believers*, as condemned, or pardoned and justify'd, as *unrenewed* or *renewed*: Whatever our Circumstances may be, as Persons of *weak* or *strong* Intellectuals, as Persons surrounded with *prosperous* or *afflictive* Providences, as *loved* or *hated* in this World, as *high* or *low*, *rich* or *poor*, in Honour or Disgrace: And whatever our *Relations* to others are, the Scriptures contain Things suitable to our Case; and are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, and for Instruction in Righteousness. <sup>2 Tim. 3. 16.</sup>

Now these are Circumstances not peculiar to any one Age of the World, or to any one Society of Persons in it, but *common* to all Ages, and with some or other of which all Sorts of Persons in the World have been, are, or may be attended. And therefore, since the Scriptures are formed in such a Manner as to suit all these Circumstances, that are alike common to Human Nature in all Ages; they must needs be, as to the main Ends of a divine Revelation, of the same Use to us now, as they were to those that lived in the Days wherein they were written. Once more,

4. GOD has graciously own'd the Scriptures with the Power of his Spirit to make them effectual to innumerable Multitudes that have lived in Ages after they were written.

SERM. I.

2. Thes.

3. 1.


Rom. 1.

16.

1 Cor. 3. 7.

As the Word of the Lord had free Course and was glorify'd, and became the Power of God to Salvation, while he gave the Increase, both in the Conversion of Sinners, and Edification of the Saints in the Apostles Days; so it has prevail'd by the same Power in After-Ages, and more or less continued to be effectual down to our Days. 'Tis by Means of this Word that Christ has all along had a Church in the World, and its Being, Establishment, and Increase, is and ever has been under him owing to it. The whole Work of Grace in the Conversion of Sinners, all the Enlargement and Purity of the Church, all its Light, Faith, Holiness, Spiritual Liberty, Peace, and Love; all the Ground it has gain'd upon Satan's Kingdom; all the Interest and Glory of Christ in our World; and all the true Religion that is found in it, derive their Birth, Continuance, and Improvement, from the Blessing of God on his Word.

Heb. 4. 12. How has this Word of God been quick and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged Sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of Soul and Spirit, and of the Joints and Marrow, and been a Discerner of the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart? Is not this as true of the written Word, accompanied with the enlightening and all-powerful Spirit, as of Christ, whose Name is called The Word of God? How often has the Scripture, or Christ by the Scripture, reach'd the Sinner's Heart, discover'd to him his own Guiltiness, Vileness, and Unworthiness, and vain Confidence, which before he took no Notice of, and brought him to the most touching serious Reflections under those affecting Views? How has it anatomized his Heart, and drawn out his deformed Picture before the

the Eye of his own Conscience, and even SERM. I. constrain'd him to say, *Behold, I am vile?* 

How has the Scripture been own'd of God to open the Eyes of the blind Sinner, to awaken the stupid Sinner, to convince the self-sufficient and self-confident Sinner, to melt and soften the harden'd Sinner, to captivate the obstinate and unyielding Sinner to the Obedience of Christ; to work the furious wrathful Sinner into Meekness and Love, to reform the profligate Sinner, and to make a thorow Change of Heart and Life upon the sensual, graceless Sinner; to make the daring Sinner tremble, to make the trembling Sinner rejoyce; to make the proud Sinner humble, and to quiet the guilty Conscience of the humbled Sinner, and speak his inward racking Horrors into a Calm?

How often has God own'd it to discover and indear Christ, as a compleat and suitable Saviour to the distressed and self-condemned Sinner, and to lead him to him for Righteousness and Strength, that he might find Safety, and Favour, Life, Rest, and Peace in him; to encourage the dejected, to support the disconsolate, to bind up the broken in Heart, to raise up the bowed down, to strengthen the weak, to succour the tempted, to heal the wounded, to comfort the afflicted, to satisfy the hungry, and to recover the backsliding Soul? How often to subdue and mortify prevailing Corruptions, to govern fierce and disorderly Passions, to work the Soul up to the Image of God, and to bring it to practise with Chearfulness all the Duties of Godliness, Righteousness, and Sobriety; to draw off its irregular Appetites from this World, and to give it a Taste, a Fore-Taste,  
and



**SERMON I.** and Fore-View of heavenly Felicities? And how often has God owned it to make his People apt to forgive Injuries, to deny themselves, to be patient in Tribulation, to give them the sweetest Supports under it, to carry them decently through it, and to do them good by it; to spirit them for signal Services, to engage them to cleave to him, to yield up themselves to him, and rejoyce in Hope of his Glory, even to the most exalted Triumphs, in the Midst of Sufferings and cruel Deaths for his Name's Sake?

NUMBERLESS are and have been the Instances of God's owning his Word, to the Production of these and such like Effects, down from the Apostles to this present Age. Are not some of you Witnesses upon Experience, that God continues to set his Seal to his own Word? Have not you found the Word of the Lord precious? Have you not sometimes been impress'd in a divine Manner by it, and felt its victorious Prevalence on your Hearts and Lives? I am perswaded God has not left himself without Witness to these Things among you. But if he had not design'd his Word for standing Use, he would not have continued thus to own it. And his owning it with the Power of his Spirit and Grace for these Purposes, is a good Evidence to our Reason, and to our spiritual Senses, when they are duly exercised, that he designed it for standing Use in this, as well as in former Generations.

THIS Point might be further argued from the standing Use the *Old Testament* was of to the Jews, in all their Generations: From the *Wisdom* and *Grace* of God, which, according to Scripture-Accounts of it, cannot be supposed to confine the Use of such an admirable Discovery

Discovery to the People then in Being: From SERM. I. his remarkable *Care* in preserving the Scripture through all the Violence, Fraud, and Malice of its Adversaries, to our Days: From the *Light* and *Improvements* it has added to the Principles of *Natural Religion*, even in the Minds of those that have rejected its divine Authority: From God's never having given any other Revelation, nor the least Ground of expecting another, to direct our Conduct in this World, or to shew us our Way to eternal Life in the next. He having now set up the New Covenant Dispensation, which is said to consist of *Things that cannot be shaken*, and is Heb. 12. called a *Kingdom that cannot be moved*, as the 27, 28. Old Covenant Dispensation was. And from some *Prophecies* both of the Old and New Testament, which are still to be accomplished; as, not to mention others, particularly those in the Book of the *Revelation*, which was the last of the sacred Writings, and speaks of the several Ages of the Church, from that Time to the Coming of Christ again, and was closed with a solemn Charge to preserve it without any Additions to it, or Diminutions of it, Rev. 22. 18, 19.—But what has been said may be sufficient to shew that the Scriptures are of the standing Use to the Christian Church, in all Ages, that has been pleaded for.

#### A P P L I C A T I O N.

I. LET this raise our *Esteem* and *Thankfulness* for all the Scriptures.

THEY are all useful and valuable, in Proportion to their Design, the *Old Testament* as well as the *New*. They confirm the Divine Authority of each other, by their harmonious Agree-

SERM. I.

Agreement in Things which none but God could reveal ; and they add Light to one another in numerous Instances, which could not be so well understood, without the Assistance which one of them gives to the other. Both of them are noble Monuments and Effects of the adorable Wisdom, Goodness, and Condescension of God to the Children of Men. They are *both* rich Treasures of entertaining, sublime, and improving Doctrines. They are still the Word of God, which he owns for the Advancement of true Religion in the World : And no Circumstance of Life can befall us, but there is something in them suitable to it. They were all *written for our Learning*, and one Way or other may be profitable to us.

2 Cor. 3.  
18.

THE *Old Testament* is full of beautiful and instructive Histories and Prophecies, of Moral Doctrines and Gospel-Hints, and abounds very much in practical and experimental Religion, and therefore 'tis not to be despised ; as if, because its peculiar Institutions were antiquated, it self was to be out of Date ; or as if we had nothing to do with its vast Variety of noble Sentiments, and could not be profited by them : Much less should we slight or neglect the *New Testament*, in which with open Face we may behold as in a Glass the Glory of the Lord, as if what it says related only to the particular Circumstances of the Age in which it was written, and do not concern us in these distant Days. But let us prize and be exceeding thankful for the whole Bible. Let us give it an upper Room in our Hearts, and like David, *rejoice at God's Word, as those that find great Spoil*. Keep it as an inestimable Treasure, read it often, and study it closely ;

Psal. 119.  
162.

go to it for Direction and Relief in all Cases, bless God for the watchful Providence that has taken Care of it, and particularly for the Protestant Reformation, that has return'd it into our Hands. And let all our Thankfulness to God, and Esteem for his Word, express themselves in the utmost Diligence, with an humble Dependance on him for Light and Grace, to understand, believe, and act according to all that it sets before us for our Faith and Practice, to his Glory, and our own Salvation.

SEAM. I.  
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2. LET us converse with the Scripture as God's Word to us.

DON'T read it as only a History of antient Things, or as a Scheme of Notions, that are only to stock the Mind with Knowledge : But consider it as God's Word to you, for your own practical Use, and which is as really spoken to you, for the several Purposes for which you need it, as if you now heard it pronounced by an audible Voice from Heaven.

WHEN any Thing in it describes you, or speaks to your Case, let Conscience say, This is God's Word to me, as such I must receive it ; as such I must be bound by it ; as such I must improve it ; as such I must live upon it ; as such I must yield up my self to it, that all my religious Sentiments, my Faith, Hope, Temper, and Conduct may be regulated by it ; and as such I must be try'd and judg'd, acquitted or cast for Eternity, according to it at the last Day.

IF any of us were to hear a Voice from Heaven directed to us, relating to any Circumstances in which we find our selves, should we not think it desperate Perverseness to reject or disobey it ? Should we not be ashamed of



- SERM. I. of the Unbelief that would refuse it ? And  
 yet the Apostle Peter says, *We have a more sure*  
 2 Pet. I. *Word of Prophecy, whereunto we do well to take*  
 19. *heed, as unto a Light that shineth in a dark Place.*  
 Heb. 12. God doth indeed *speake* in that *Word from Hea-*  
 25. *ven*, and 'tis at our utmost Peril to *turn away*  
*from him*. Whatever therefore we find in his  
 Word adapted to our particular Case, let us  
 take it all to our selves, and subject our Con-  
 sciences to the Authority of God in it, who  
 enjoins it upon us, and has given us a full  
 Assurance, that *whatever was written afore-*  
*time, was written for our Learning, that we thro'*  
*Patience, and Comfort of the Scriptures might have*  
*Hope*. But an Occasion will offer to recom-  
 mend this more at large hereafter.

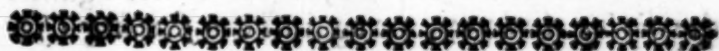


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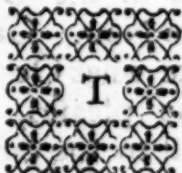


## SERMON II.



ROM. xv. 4.

*For whatsoever Things were written  
afore-time, were written for our  
Learning, &c.*

II.  H A T which lies next before SERM. II.  
us to consider is, *What Use*  
*we may make of the Scriptures,*  
*tho' they were mostly written on*  
*special Occasions, or with an im-*  
*mediate Relation to some particular Persons or*  
*Societies.*

IT must be acknowledg'd, that the greatest  
Part of the Scriptures, both of the Old and  
New Testament, was written in that Manner.  
*The Oracles of God* under the Old Testament Rom. 3. 2.  
*were committed to the Church of Israel, as be-*  
*longing in a peculiar Manner to them; and*  
*they were mostly written with an immediate*  
*Reference*

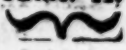
SERM. II.

Reference to their Affairs, and as their Occasions requir'd. And upon the great Alteration that was made in the State of the Church, by the Coming of the promised Messiah, the *New Testament* was written with a peculiar Reference thereunto, as the Nature of Things requir'd it should; and most of it was immediately directed to some particular Persons or Churches, on some special Occasions that then arose amongst them.

BUT this is no just Objection either against the *divine Authority*, or against the *standing Usefulness* of the Scriptures.

1. 'TIS no just Objection against the *divine Authority* of the Scriptures. This the Heb. 1. 1, Apostle intimates when he says, *God, who at sundry Times, and in divers Manners, spake in Times past to the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last Days spoken to us by his Son.* Whatever were the Seasons and Occasions of speaking, or the Persons immediately spoken to, it was God that spoke by the Prophets in the Old Testament, and by his Son in the New. God has an undoubted Right to take what Occasions; and use what Methods he pleases, to communicate his Mind and Will to the Sons of Men; and the more suitable those Occasions were for the Revelations he at several Times gave, the more his Wisdom and Goodness appear'd in them. This is one Part of that divine Condescension and Skill that is mention'd in *Isa. 50. 4. The Lord God hath given me the Tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a Word in Season to him that is weary.*

*no Objection against their D. Authority.* 33

Yea, This Method of forming the Scrip- SERM. II.  
tures on different Occasions, with a Regard   
to different Persons, and in different Times  
and Ages, shews that there could be no *crafty*  
*Agreement* of designing Men in composing  
them, and that no one such Man could be the  
Author of them : And brings in a great Va-  
riety of Persons, Societies, and Generations  
that received them, as Witnesses to the Truth  
of those Credentials, which attended the Sa-  
cred Writers, to prove that they came and  
spoke from God. And this the Apostle al-  
leges to inforce a conscientious Subjection to  
the divine Authority of the Doctrines of the  
*New Testament*, as well as of the Old. *For if Heb. 2. 2;*  
*the Word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every 3. 4.*  
*Transgression and Disobedience received a just Re-*  
*compence of Reward : How shall we escape if we*  
*neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began*  
*to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto*  
*us by them that heard him ; God also bearing them*  
*Witness, both with Signs and Wonders, and with*  
*divers Miracles, and Gifts of the Holy Ghost, ac-*  
*cording to his own Will ?*

Had the Scripture been wrought up into an  
artificial, exact, and methodical System of Do-  
ctrines, Precepts, Threatnings, Promises, and  
Encouragements, without respect to some parti-  
cular Occasions and Circumstances, it would  
have look'd with an Air of human Contrivance  
and Management, and been much more liable  
to Suspicions of Forgery, than it now is, in the  
Form in which 'tis deliver'd to us. There is a  
noble and genuine Simplicity in this Way of  
writing it, which shews that it owes its Birth and  
Efficacy to the Wisdom and Power of God ; and  
not to the Art or Policy of Men. And we  
may say of the Scripture in general, what  
D the



HEARN. II.  
1 Cor. 2.  
4, 5.

the Apostle said of his Preaching in particular, that it was not with enticing Words of Man's Wisdom, but in Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power, that your Faith should not stand in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God.

AND there is this further remarkable Evidence of the Divine Authority of the Scriptures, from this Way of their being written; that they record in latter Ages the manifest Accomplishment of many of those Prophecies, which made a part of the sacred Volume in former Ages; as any unprejudic'd Mind may easily observe, in comparing one part of the Old Testament with another, and the Old Testament with the New. So that it might have been said, and was truly said in effect of many Scriptures of the Old Testament, when Christ appear'd in the Flesh, and soon afterwards, as he said of one of them, *This Day is this Scripture fulfilled in your Ears.*

Luke 4.  
21.

2. NOR is this Manner, in which the Scriptures were written, a just Objection against their standing Usefulness. This the Apostle intimates in our Text, where he says, *Whatsoever Things were written afore-time, were written for our Learning.*

IT is indeed, as I apprehend, morally impossible, that a Set of even inspired Writings, so full and particular as the Scriptures are, whether written on special Occasions or no, should be in every Passage of equal Use to every Age. For that would necessarily suppose, either that all the Circumstances of every Age must be invariably the same; or that the Provision made for them in those Writings must be confin'd to general Rules and Topicks. To suppose the first is to forget the fluctuating State of Human Nature, and the Vicissitudes of

## Objection against their D. Authority. 35

of this World: And to suppose the *Second*, is *Grav. II.*  
to suppose a Set of Writings much less useful  
than the Scriptures are, in a Multitude of  
particular Cases; to which they are peculiar-  
ly adapted.

It may therefore be allow'd, that some  
Things in the Scriptures might be more re-  
markably useful to those, to whom they were  
immediately directed; than to us; and, that  
other Things may be more useful to the pre-  
sent, and some past Ages, than to them, as  
they relate to prophecy'd Events, that have  
come to pass since the sacred Canon was fi-  
nished; and to some Corruptions in Doctrine,  
Worship, and Manners, which the All-wise  
God fore-saw would spring up and trouble the  
Church in after Ages. Thus in the Instituti-  
on of the *Lord's Supper*, the universal Particle  
*All*, used of the Cup, and not of the Bread,  
*Drink ye all of it*, is of greater Use since the  
Church of *Rome* have depriv'd the Laity of  
the Cup, thereby to countenance the abomina-  
ble Figment of Transubstantiation, and idola-  
trous Adoration of the Host, than it was of  
before. And for like Reasons it may be sup-  
posed, that some other Passages may be of  
more use to Ages yet unborn, than either to us,  
or to any that are gone before us. And yet  
we may not be excluded from reaping consi-  
derable Benefit even from such Passages as are  
more peculiarly suited to other Times and  
Circumstances. And as the *principal* Con-  
cerns of Mankind, as to all the *main* Purpo-  
ses of a Divine Revelation, are in every Age  
the same; so 'tis no hard Matter to conceive  
that Revelation to be form'd in such a Man-  
ner, though mostly written on special Occasi-  
ons; as should be best adapted for common

*SEAM.* II. Use, especially in its principal and most momentous Points, to every Age of the World.

'Tis no uncusomary Practice among Men, to write such Things to particular Persons, and on particular Occasions, as they design for common Usefulness, and as really are of great Service to others. It is not unusual for Human *Legislators* to make Laws on particular Occasions for universal, and future Obligation on the Subjects of their State: Or for *Physicians* to publish Rules and Prescriptions of Medicines on particular Occasions, and in particular Cases, which they design for general Use, and may be of great Advantage to others. How much more may we suppose, that the All-knowing God, who always had in one comprehensive View, all the possible Circumstances of All, that ever should be in the World, might take the particular Occasions, which His infinite Wisdom saw most proper, to deliver His Mind and Will in such a Manner, as should make it of standing Use to all succeeding Generations? Accordingly it has been already observed, that there is abundant Evidence from the Scripture it self, and from the Reason of Things, that it was designed for such Use.

THE Designs of Men in this, as well as in every other Method of Management, may often fail, because they can see but a little way before them, and have but a very narrow and uncertain View of what may fall out, or of what Alterations may arise in the State of Things, which may require new Directions, Rules, and Laws for the Management of them: And therefore they often find themselves obliged to alter and mend, to annul, or add to their former Plans, that they may accommodate them to new



## Objection against their D. Authority. 37

Occurrences, which they never thought of before. But as the infinitely perfect God can be liable to no Mistakes, and as he comprehensively knows the Make and Turn of Human Nature in all its Forms, and unerringly foresees all the Occurrences that ever will befall it, he cannot fail of his Design; but can as easily form his Revelations on particular Occasions to suit all Cases and all Ages, as if he had made those Revelations without a respect to those immediate Occasions of them. When our Lord sent his Apostles on a special Commission into Judea, he said unto them, *Behold, I send you forth as Sheep in the midst of Wolves: Be ye therefore wise as Serpents, and harmless as Doves.* This, which was spoken on that particular Occasion, was full, and suitable to their Case, and as good a Rule for their Conduct, all the Days of their Lives afterwards. And whoever considers the Temper of the World, with respect to Christ's Disciples and Servants ever since, down to these Days, must own, that this Maxim ever has been, and still is as useful to them, as any that could be given in the present Circumstances of Things. The same might easily be observed in numberless other Instances.

AND this Method that God has taken to indite the Scriptures, or to move the holy Men of old to speak and write them, is admirably suited to make them useful to us. The various Forms in which it was proper they should be written on the different Occasions that called for them, fit them to strike with the greater Advantage on different Sorts of Minds. Some are most impress'd with *Historical* Narratives; others with *Epistolary* Writings; others with *Examples*; others with Records of *Experiences*; and others with



### 38 *Scriptures occasionally written, &c.*

*§ 2. II. Propheatic Discourses.* Some are most touch'd with close and *rational Argument*, and others with the Holy Fire of *strong Devotion*; Some with *beautiful Turns* of Thought and Expression, and others with *plain and authoritative Applications* to Conscience: Some with *familiar, obvious Truths*, and others with *Doctrines more sublime*, and out of the common Road: Some with the *sweet Insinuations* of Meekness and Love, and others with the *amazing Terrors* of threaten'd Resentments.

Now, the different *Occasions* of Writing the Scriptures, and the different *Circumstances* of those to whom they were first written, naturally led to all these Methods of Address; and this is wonderfully order'd by the Wisdom of God to subserve their greatest Usefulness to us, according to his Design by them; which is not only to inform, but likewise to *move* and *influence* us, according to our different Tempers and Capacities, unto suitable Dispositions and Actions; to work upon the Minds and Consciences, and Affections of Men; and to strike upon all the Springs of Human Conduct. So that this Method of communicating them to us, is so far from destroying their Usefulness, that it tends to make them, in some

1 Tim. 3. respects, the more profitable for Doctrine, for  
16, 17. Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness; that the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished to all good Works.

HAVING thus prepar'd my Way, I shall, in further speaking to this second General Head,

First, GIVE you a few general Rules about the Use we should make of the Scriptures thus delivered to us. And then,

Second-

## General Rules for using the Scriptures. 39

Secondly, CONSIDER it in a more particular *SEAM. II.*  
*lar-Manner.*

First, Give you a few general Rules about the Use we should make of the Scriptures thus delivered to us. Therefore,

I. We should make Use of the Things we find in Scripture, according to their different IMPORTANCE and ADVANTAGE to us.

THOUGH all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God, and is some Way or other profitable to us; yet all its Parts are not alike profitable, nor of alike Importance to us. What it says of Christ, and of the Method of God's Grace about the Salvation of Sinners by him, and of the great Doctrines and Duties of Faith, Repentance, Love, and Evangelical Obedience, is of much greater Moment in it self, and of much greater Advantage to us, than what it says concerning Genealogies of Families, Situation of Places, Jewish Rites and Ceremonies, Meats, and Days, and the like.

SOME Things made known in Scripture are necessary to the Glory of God, the Good of others, and our own Everlasting Happiness; but God might be glorify'd, the Good of others promoted, and we eternally saved, if some other Things in Scripture had never been made known to us. And yet these likewise are useful in their Places to *subserve* those high Designs, and they help to make up the Perfection and Beauty of the Scripture in some lower Proportions. As in the Frame of our Bodies, God, in his infinite Wisdom, hath so order'd it, that there are some Parts vital, or absolutely necessary to this present Life; such as the Brains, the Heart, the Lungs, the Stomach

*Sec. II. mach and Bowels* : Other Parts are necessary to the *Comfort* and *easy* Operations of Life ; such as the *Cuticula*, or outward *Skin*, the *Eyes*, the *Hands*, and *Feet* : And other Parts are *subordinately* useful to these Ends, and *ornamental* to the Body ; such as the *Number* of our *Fingers* and *Toes*, our *Hair* and *Nails*, and the numerous little *Hairs*, that spire out in the greatest Part of our Bodies. Now, though some of these are of much greater Use and Importance to us than others ; yet they all have their Use in their proper Proportions, and unite to make up the Perfection and Beauty of the whole Body. The like may be said of the several Parts of Scripture ; though we are not fully acquainted with the particular Use of them all, any more than we are with the Use of all the Parts of our Bodies.

BUT as our greatest Regard is to such Parts of the Body as are most *vital* and *necessary*, so our highest Regards should be to such Parts of Scripture as *most nearly* concern the Glory of God, our own Everlasting Salvation, and the Good of others. These should sit uppermost on our Hearts, should engage our closest Study, and most familiar Acquaintance ; these should command our chief Esteem, and determine our most earnest Pursuits after them ; not to the Neglect of other Parts of Scripture ; but in Preference to them, which are to be used as beneficial in their proper Places, and with all due Care and Reverence in subservience unto these. This our Blessed Lord intimated

Mat. 23.

23.

to the *Jews*, when he said, *Ye pay Tithe of Mint, Anise, and Cummin* (Obligations which might be supposed to be included in the Law of Tithes, *Lev. 27. 30.*) and have omitted the weightier Matters of the Law, *Judgment, Mercy,*  
and



and Faith: These ought ye to have done, and not SERM. II.  
to leave the other undone. And something like  
this the Apostle seems to have in his Eye in  
his Prayer for the *Philippians*, where he says,  
*This I pray, that your Love may abound yet more* Phil. i. 9,  
*and more in Knowledge, and in all Judgment, that* 10, 11.  
*ye may approve Things that are Excellent, that ye*  
*may be Sincere, and without Offence, till the Day*  
*of Christ: Being filled with the Fruits of Righte-*  
*ousness, which are by Jesus Christ unto the Glory*  
*and Praise of God. The Things that are Excel-*  
*lent* [*τὰ διαφέροντα*] *might have been render'd,*  
*the Things that are more Excellent, that is, in*  
*Comparison with other Things. And so it is*  
*translated in Rom. 2. 12. Accordingly this*  
*Apostle preferred the Knowledge of a cru-*  
*cify'd Christ, to all other Knowledge. For,* 1 Cor. 2. 23  
*says he, I determined not to know any Thing*  
*among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucify'd.*  
*And at another Time, Yea, doubtless, and* 1 Phil. 3.  
*count all Things but Loss for the Excellency of* 8, 9, 10.  
*the Knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for*  
*whom I have suffered the Loss of all Things, and*  
*do count them but Dung that I may win Christ, and*  
*be found in him, not having mine own Righteous-*  
*ness, which is of the Law; but that which is through*  
*the Faith of Christ, the Righteousness which is of*  
*God by Faith; that I may know him, and the Pow-*  
*er of his Resurrection, and the Fellowship of his*  
*Sufferings, being made conformable unto his Death.*

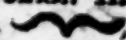
2. WE should make useful OBSERVATIONS  
and REFLECTIONS on such Passages of Scrip-  
ture, as represent Things PECULIAR to former  
Persons and Times.

SOME Things in Scripture were suited to  
one State of the Church, which don't agree to  
another, as is manifest with respect to a nu-  
merous Train of Observances injoin'd under  
the



*Stam. II.* the *Old Testament Dispensation* which are so far from obliging us to the Practice of them now, that 'twould be an interpretative Denial, that Christ is come in the Flesh, for us to return to the Practice of them again. For they were only *Figures for the Time then present*, — and imposed till the *Time of Reformation*, which was to be wrought by the Coming of Christ our great High Priest, *Heb. 9. 9, 10, 11, &c.* Other Passages of Scripture relate to Persons and Things, that antiently were; but will never appear again in the World; of which we have many Instances in the *Histories and Genealogies* of the *Old and New Testament*, and in the *extraordinary* Appearances of God to some, and *immediate Inspiration* of others.

*ALL* Things of this kind should be read and consider'd, with careful *Observation*, and improving *Reflections*, to the Glory of God, and our own Advantage. We should consider what of God, of his Perfections, Will, Ways, and Works, appears in them: What Moral and Divine Instructions we may learn from them, to adjust our Thoughts about the Measure of his Government, and to direct our own Dealings with him, and walk before him: And what Examples we may meet with, for our Imitation; what, above our reach, and, what to be avoided. We should observe how far some Things of this Sort may be accommodated to some Circumstances that we either are or may be in, and what Allowances must be made for particular Differences of Circumstances in other Things; how much better or worse we are; and how much better or worse the Dispensation, and the State of it is, as to Light, Grace and Efficacy, under which we live. We ought not to read these

these Things like Children, without Concern SERM. II.  
 to understand them, or profit by them; but   
 should read 'em like *Men in Understanding*, with I Cor. 14.  
 the *Observations, Reflections and Improvements*, 20.  
 that may arise from them, to stock our Minds  
 with useful Knowledge, to mend the Temper  
 of our Hearts, and to order our Thoughts  
 and Behaviour, to exalt God, and humble  
 our selves before him, and to keep up our  
 Dependencies on God in Christ, our Expecta-  
 tions from him, our holy Awe and Fear of  
 him, and our Love, Gratitude, and Obedi-  
 ence to him. This is the Way which the Psal-  
 mist suggests for our Use of such Parts of  
 God's Word as these; when, having recited  
 several Instances of God's antient Ways and  
 Works, he shuts up the Account with this Re-  
 mark, *Who is wise, and will observe those* Psal. 107.  
*Things; even they shall understand the Loving*  
*Kindness of the Lord.* 43.

OBSERVATION and Reflection, for the  
 Improvement of Things to some valuable Pur-  
 poses of Life, employ the Minds of all wise  
 Men, when they read antient Histories, Laws  
 and Customs, or Discourses upon them; and  
 he is always reckon'd a Man of a mean, weak  
 and lazy Soul, that don't read them with such  
 Views, and learn something to his own Di-  
 rection by them. How much more should we  
 aim and hope to grow wiser and better by at-  
 tentive and serious Searches into the venerable  
 Records of sacred Antiquity, which convey  
 to us the surest and antientest Testimonies of  
 what has been transacted among God's own  
 People in former Times, though they were  
 peculiar to those Times, and to the Persons  
 that lived in them? And however, at first  
 sight many of those Passages may seem to have

no

SERM. II.

no manner of Reference to us; yet the more closely we consider them, the clearer Traces we may find of their necessary Subservience to some other Things, in which we can't but allow our selves to be most nearly concern'd. They are a Series of Things that gradually made way for others of the greatest Consequence to us, and may at least afford us the delightful Reflections, that God has graciously reserv'd our Lot to the Ages of plenteous Blessings, which his infinite Wisdom all along design'd to introduce by those Means amongst us. 'Twould be very possible for a strong, laborious, and sanctify'd Mind, to draw out in beautiful Aspects of this Kind, the antient Accounts of the Ante-diluvian World, of the Divisions of the Nations afterwards; of the Peculiarities of *Abraham's* Family down to the Sale of *Joseph* into *Egypt*; together with the general Course of God's Conduct towards *Israel* from that Time to the Coming of Christ, and to the first Settlement of Gospel-Churches in the Apostles Days.

WE may one way or other get great Benefit from these Things, if we attend to them with Wisdom and Care, and with an Eye to the God of Wisdom to teach us to profit by them. And his giving us these Records in that Revelation, which is to govern our Faith and Practice, is a plain Intimation that they some way belong to us, and admit of such Improvements, in the Exercise of our Minds about them, as may abound to our Account.

3. SUCH Things as are in themselves, or by Divine Appointment, of an ABIDING Nature, we should use as the PRINCIPAL Rules of our Faith and Practice.

THE Scriptures, both of the Old and New SERM. II. Testament, are full of Doctrines and Duties of an *abiding* Nature.

IN the Old Testament there are abundance of Doctrines reveal'd, though some of them in an obscurer Manner, that may be call'd, some in a strict, and others in a qualify'd Sense, *eternal* Truths. Doctrines concerning God's Being, Attributes, Counsels, Purposes, Ways, and Works; concerning the Unity of God, the Father, Son and Spirit, as the only Jehovah of *Israel*, in Distinction from, and Opposition to all other Gods; concerning the Creation of the World; the Fall of Man, and the great Corruption, Degeneracy, Guilt, Deformity, and Weakness of Human Nature, by and since the Fall; concerning the Severity of God's Justice against Sin and Sinners, and the Freeness of his Grace in pardoning Sin to the Returning Sinner, through, and on the Account of the great Messiah; concerning this Messiah's Person, Office and Death, and Resurrection from the Dead; concerning the Spiritual Nature of his Kingdom, and God's intended Favour to the *Gentiles*, concerning his enlightning, renewing, strengthening, restoring, comforting, and preserving Grace; and concerning the future Judgment, a glorious Immortality, and a Resurrection to Eternal Life.

MANY Intimations of these, and such like Things, are scatter'd about in the Scriptures of the *Old Testament*; in the Histories, Types, Promises, and Prophecies, that are there recorded. Your own diligent Observation in Reading will furnish you with Proofs of them severally, which 'twould be too tedious for me to recite. And such of them as needed  
still



SERM. II. still further explaining, are set in a much stronger and more extensive Light by the Gospel Dispensation, or in the New Testament, as all Christians will readily allow.

THESE are Doctrines of Eternal Truth, I mean in a lax Sense of the Expression, such as either always were, or at least always will be true, or both; and accordingly such as arise either from the Nature and Circumstances of Things, or from the Sovereign, and yet fix'd and unchangeable Will, Permission; or Constitution of God, as they may be distinguish'd from temporary Things. These we are to enquire into, that we may have a good Understanding of them. These we are to believe, assent to, and receive by Faith, as Things that immediately relate to our selves, or that we are nearly concern'd to know; as Things by, and according to which, we should be influenced to deal with God in Christ for everlasting Life; and as Things by which we may be made *Wise unto Salvation, through Faith that is in Christ Jesus.*

IN the Old Testament we have likewise a large Draught of moral Duties, which we owe, and are oblig'd to perform toward God, our Neighbour, and our selves; or in the Language of the Apostle, by living *soberly, righteously, and*  
 Tit. 2. 12. *godly, in this present World.* We have clear Directions, and strong Injunctions, with respect to the due Government of our Thoughts, our Tempers, Dispositions; Designs, Words, and Acts, as they are summarily comprehended in the *Ten Commandments*, and are drawn out, exemplify'd and explain'd more at large in the Historical, Practical, and Prophetick Writings. These are Duties of an Eternal Nature, arising from the unchangeable Reasons  
 of

of Things, from the Subjection of the Creature to God, and from the Relations we bear to him, and one another.

WE have here likewise many Calls to Repentance, which is a Duty of an abiding Nature and Obligation, upon the Supposition of our being in a State attended with Sin; and many Intimations of the Duty of Faith in the Messiah, who was promised, and was then to come, which is a Duty that has its original Foundation in the Obligations we are under as Creatures, to believe what God reveals and appoints to be the Object of our Faith, or to believe in God according to the Method, and in the Way that he shall prescribe to us; though its next immediate Foundation be in the free Revelation he has made of his gracious Will, that we, as sinful Creatures, should believe in his Son Jesus Christ, in order to our obtaining eternal Life through him.

THESE Things are still with abundantly more Advantage reveal'd, explain'd, directed, inculcated, and demanded in the New Testament. Faith, Repentance, Love, and New Obedience, are there set out in their evangelical Turn; in their Nature, Uses, and Designs, with the Obligations we are under to them all, with the Motives that inforce them, and with the distinct Places and Order in which they stand in the Method of our Salvation. These are of unchangeable Use, and binding Necessity to all that hear the Gospel, or have the Word of Salvation sent to them, whether they are Jews or Gentiles. Hence the Apostle made it his great Business, to testify both to the Jews, Acts 20, and to the Greeks, Repentance toward God, and Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Which Repentance

**Serm. II.** *penitance and Faith necessarily include, or lead to Love and New Obedience: In as much as Repentance towards God is a mere hypocritical Pretence, unless it brings forth Fruits meet for*

**Mat. 3. 8.** *Repentance: And Faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ, an empty Notion, or a dead Faith, unless, according to the Scripture Description*

**Gal. 5. 6.** *of it, it works by Love, and purifies the Heart.*

**Acts 15. 9.** *Therefore those Parts of Scripture that speak of these Things, should be studied and used, as principal Rules of our Practice, with regard to our own personal Actings toward God in Christ, and walking in all good Conscience before him.*

BESIDES these, we have some *positive* Institutions for the Members of the Visible Church under the Gospel State, which are appointed to continue as long as that State shall last; and they are *Baptism* and the *Lord's Supper*. We have Intimations attending the Institution of both these, that they are appointed for standing Ordinances, and are to be continued to the End of the World. *Baptism* is spoken of, as to be continued as long as the Gospel it self shall be preach'd (*Mat. 28. 19, 20.*) And the *Lord's Supper* is mentioned by the Apostle *Paul*, as an Institution of Christ, to continue in the Church *till he comes again* (*1 Cor. 11. 23 — 26.*) Accordingly the History of the *Acts of the Apostles*, and some of their *Epistles* inform us, that *Baptism* was apply'd to the Converts of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, and their Houses: And that the Churches frequently celebrated in their Assemblies the *Supper of the Lord*. And the earliest succeeding Writers of the Primitive Church have left very plain Memorials, that they continued to practise both those Ordinances as abiding Institutions

stitutions of Worship. These *positive* Institutions belong to us, as *professing* Christians, and shou'd be used by us as such, to distinguish us from the World; from the *Turks and Jews*, and from the Heathen, the Irreligious, and the Prophane. We should use them as the Laws and Privileges of Christ's Kingdom, that belong to all its faithful Subjects, to assist and confirm their Faith, and encourage their Hopes in God's Covenant, and to strengthen and enforce their Obligations to be the Lord's. And all that the Scripture says, with respect to these, should be heedfully regarded, to direct and engage a regular Observation of them.

*The Second Part of Sermon II.*

4 **T**HOSE Things, in Scripture that are founded on such Reasons as are COMMON to other Cases of a like Nature, or to like Occasions, should be APPLY'D to all such Cases, and on all such Occasions, as far as the Reasons of them are the same.

WHERE the Reasons of Things are the same, we have warrant for an Application: And what was said on particular Occasions upon those Reasons, may, as far as the Force of those Reasons will carry it, be equally said of all other Cases of the like Nature and Concern to us. Whatever is argued in Scripture from God's infinite Goodness, Love and Grace, from his Faithfulness to his Promises, or from his Delight in his People; and whatever is argued from his Pleasure in Righteousness, from his Abhorrence of Evil, from his Patience toward Sinners, or from his Ju-



## General Rules for

55

**SERMON II.** Justice in punishing their Iniquities, or from the Regards that are due to him, is of the same Weight with respect to all Instances of the like Nature, now, where the same Reasons of Things are alike concern'd.

Two *ov* *1* *b* be almost endless to go through the Instances of this Kind, that might be alledged; and therefore I shall only illustrate what I intend, by some brief Hints, with respect to the principal Doctrines and Duties contain'd in this excellent Epistle to the Romans, of which our Text is a part.

As this Epistle was written to a Church chiefly consisting of *Gentile* Believers, with a mixture of *Jewish* Christians, to whom the Apostle had never preach'd, it opens a plentiful Display of the Gospel in a manner admirably suited to the Circumstances of that Church. Its principal Parts have a very particular Relation to some Controversies then depending betwixt the *Jews* and *Gentiles*; and yet the *Reasons*, on which the Apostle proceeds to determine them, are of equal Truth and Concernment to us now, as they were at that Time to them; and therefore we may apply them, by the like way of arguing upon them, to settle our Faith and Practice in all Cases of a like Nature, and may gather from this Epistle a noble and extensive Idea of the Gospel for Christians in all Ages, as well as for the Christians of that Age in particular.

What the Apostle offers [*Chap. 1. 2, 3, to ver. 28.*] to prove the utter *Incapacity* of either *Gentiles* or *Jews* being justify'd by their own Righteousness, in Obedience either to the Law of Nature, or the *Mosaick* Law, that he might convince them of their equal Need of the Gospel Way of Righteousness, is applicable

using the Scriptures.

51

cable to us, to convince us of the same; be- SERM. II.  
cause the grand Reason of that Incapacity holds  
good as to us, which is, that we are all under Rom. 3.  
Sin, and become guilty before God. And this may, 19.  
be proved upon us, by many of the very same  
Arguments that he uses to prove it upon them.

WHAT he hereupon adds [Chap. 3. 21, *ad fin.* and Chap. 4.] about the only Way reveal'd  
in the Gospel for the Justification of both Jew  
and Gentile by Faith, without the Deeds of  
the Law, whether Ceremonial or Moral, is  
applicable to our Justification in the same on-  
ly Way, to the Exclusion of all our Works  
from justifying us; because the Reasons  
for excluding all Works from this Place in  
our Salvation, are of the same Force to us  
as they were to them, viz. That we are justi-  
fy'd freely by God's Grace, through the Redemp- Chap. 3.  
tion that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set 24, 25, 26.  
forth to be a Propitiation, through Faith in his  
Blood, to declare his Righteousness——that he  
might be just, and the Justifier of him that be-  
lieves in Jesus: And that he has taken this  
Way of justifying us, to exclude all boasting, Ver. 27.  
and all Rewards of Debt, to make it an Act of Chap. 4.  
unmixt Grace toward the ungodly, according to 4—8.  
David's Account of it, and that the Promise Ver. 16.  
might be sure to all the Seed.

WHAT he advances [Chap. 5. 12, *ad fin.*] with the same View, about the common deplorable Case of all Mankind by Nature, whether Gentile or Jew, as Descendants from fallen Adam, their common Father, and Covenant Head, and of the opposite Benefits brought in by Christ for both, is applicable to us, because we are as much Descendants from fallen Adam, and were represented by him in the same Manner as they were: And the Be-

SERM. II.

Rom. 5.

18, 19.

benefits brought in by Christ as a second Head, concern us as much as them, that by *his Righteousness*, the *free Gift* might come upon us to *Justification of Life*, and that by *his Obedience* we might be made righteous.

WHAT he represents [Chap. 5. 1—11. and 6. 7. 8.] about the *Advantages*, *Privileges*, *Obligations*, and *Duties* of the Gospel-State, both to *Jew* and *Gentile*; such as *Peace* toward God, *Patience*, and rejoicing in *Tribulations*, the *Hope of Glory* unto a triumphant *Assurance* of it, dying to *Sin*, and living unto God, with *Perseverance* in *Faith* and *Holiness* unto eternal *Life*: All that he says about these is applicable to Christians now; because the *Reasons* of them continue the same to them that believe, which are, Their being justified by *Faith*, not being under the *Law* but under *Grace*; being marry'd to *Christ*, and Partakers of his *Spirit*, and God's delivering up his own *Son* for them, together with God's justifying them, and *Christ's* dying, rising, and making *Intercession* for them.

WHAT the Apostle urges [Chap. 9. to ver. 29. and Chap. 11.] to clear up God's Sovereignty, *Grace*, and *Righteousness*, in the *Election* and *Reprobation* of *Gentiles* and *Jews*, either with respect to the external Dispensation of his *Grace* toward them, *nationally* consider'd, or with respect to the *Efficacy* of his *Grace* to Multitudes of the *Gentiles*, and to a *Remnant* of the *Jews*, according to the *Election* of *Grace*, *personally* consider'd, is applicable to God's *Appointments* with respect to the *Nations*, where his Gospel is preached now, and to the *Persons* to whom it becomes effectual; because the *Reasons* by which the Apostle vindicates God's *Conduct* therein, are still the same, viz. That there is originally no more De-



Desert in one than in another, but all are *alike* SERM. II.  
*unworthy* ; that God hath a *Sovereign Right* to Chap. 9.  
 withhold or give his own *undeserved Favours* as 15.  
 he pleases ; that he doth *Injury* to none ; that Ver. 17,  
 the Creature has no *Right* to *reply against his* 18.  
*Maker*, when by a *Power* resembled by the *Pot-* Ver. 20.  
*ter's over the Clay*, he *shews his Wrath*, after long 21.  
*Patience*, and in a *Way* becoming himself, to- 22.  
 ward the *Vessels of Wrath* fitted by their own *Inj-* 23.  
*quities to Destruction*, and makes known the *Riches*  
*of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy*, which he of his  
 own meer *Grace* hath afore prepared unto *Glory*,  
 even them that he hath effectually called, both 24.  
 of *Jews and Gentiles* ; and that his *Election* is  
 so intirely of *Grace*, that *Works and Grace* Chap. 11.  
 are inconsistent *Motives* to it. And what he 6.  
 offers by *Way of Caution* to the *Gentiles*, to be  
 watchful and humble under their *Privileges*,  
 is so far applicable to us, as the *Reasons* of  
 such *Cautions* are still the same, viz. That  
 whoever are cut off, 'tis by God's *righteous Se-* Ver. 20,  
*verity for their Unbelief* ; and whoever stand, 21, 22.  
 'tis by his *Goodness or Grace through Faith*.

WHAT he interweaves [*Chap. 9. 30, ad*  
*fin. and Chap. 10.*] about the *Miscarriage* of  
 the *Jew*, and the *Attainment* of the *Gentile*, in  
 Reference to the *Gospel Salvation*, which was  
 propos'd in common to each, without *Di-*  
*stinction of Nations*, is applicable to us now ;  
 because the same *Reasons* of both respectively  
 may be found among us, and where-ever they  
 are found, will have the same *Effects*. The  
*Jews* fatal *Miscarriage* lay in their *seeking that* Chap. 9.  
*Salvation, not by Faith, stumbling at Christ, esta-* 32.  
*blishing their own Righteousness, and not submit-* & 10. 3.  
*ting themselves to the Righteousness of God* : And  
 the *Gentiles* happy *Success* lay in their *seeking it* Chap. 9.  
*by Faith*. And the same different *Effects* will 30, 33.



**SECT. II.** still follow the same different Ways of seeking it; because the Grounds on which they depended, **Rom. 10.** still continue the same, which are, That *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believes*: That with the Heart Man believes **ver. 10, 11.** to Righteousness, &c. That the same Lord over all, **12—17.** is rich to all that call upon him; and that he sends his Gospel to be the Means of working Faith.

WHAT he farther adds in the practical Part of this Epistle [*Chap. 12.*] to recommend a great Variety of *personal and relative Duties*, is applicable to us; because those Duties are founded in the Reasons of Things, in the common Obligations of the Gospel, and in the natural, civil, and spiritual Relations, which are the same now, as they were then.

WHAT he says [*Chap. 13.*] particularly about the Duty of being subject to *Civil Magistrates*, against the Opinion, that some seem to have entertain'd, as if by their becoming Christians they were discharged from Obligations of Obedience to Civil Powers, especially if they were *Heathen Powers*, is of Force to enjoin our Subjection in all lawful Things to the Magistrates under which we live; because **Chap. 13.** the Reasons urged for it are still the same, **1—4.** which are, That Civil Powers are the *Ordinances of God*, to be *Terrors not to good Works, but to the evil*, and are *Ministers of God to us for Good*. And what he further adds in this Chapter, [*ver. 8, &c.*] to enforce the great Duty of **Ver. 8.** Love, is applicable to us; because the Reason abides, *viz.* That Love is the fulfilling of the Law.

WHAT he inculcates [*Chap. 14. and 15. 1—13.*] about Christians *mutual Forbearance* with respect to *indifferent Things*, is applicable to the like Forbearance now, in all other Instances of such Things; because the Reasons of

of it are still the same, viz. That every one <sup>Sent. II.</sup> stands or falls to his own Master, and must give <sup>Rom. 14.</sup> an Account of himself to God: That the Want of <sup>4-12,</sup> this Forbearance is a Breach of the Law of <sup>15, 17, 18.</sup> Charity; that the acceptable Parts of Christian <sup>Chap. 15.</sup> Religion consist of Things of much greater <sup>1, 7.</sup> Worth and Importance; that the Law of Equity requires the strong to bear the Infirmities of the Weak; and that Christ hath received both.

THE rest of this Epistle is chiefly taken up in a softening *Apology* for writing it with such Freedom, in very engaging Expressions of the Apostles's great Affection to them, and desire to see them in proper Season to their mutual Joy, and in *Salutations* of several by Name, with some other incidental Things; and the whole is concluded after his usual Manner. Though all these have likewise their Use, to teach us Christian Prudence, Meekness, Modesty, Gratitude, and Love, yet they don't properly fall under my present Design.

WHAT I have said about our being concerned in the main Doctrines of this Epistle, the Reasons of which are still the same, will, I persuade my self, be allow'd, by Christians of all Denominations, to be just, with respect to some or other of the Instances I have mention'd; and why the same Way of arguing may not be admitted for the like Use of the rest, I cannot apprehend.

UNTO this general Rule about the Use of the Scripture, belong the just, and regular Consequences, or Inferences, we may draw from the plain Principles it lays down, for extending and strengthening our Faith, and directing our Practice in many Particulars not expressly mention'd in the very Words of Scripture themselves. The Nature of Interpretation

## General Rules for

56  
 II. supposes this Method of using the Scriptures; and a due Exercise of our intellectual Faculties about what we find in them necessarily leads us to it. The Design of a Revelation from God to rational Creatures makes this our Duty; and our own profiting by it depends abundantly, under his Blessing, on a humble Diligence in it. Accordingly, the great Prophet of the Church has taught us this instructive Method of using the Scriptures in his own Example, when he argued for the *Resurrection of the Dead*, and prov'd it by an Inference from *Moses's calling the Lord, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob: For, says Christ, he is not a God of the Dead, but of the Living; for All live unto him.*

5. SUCH Things, as draw out the different STATES, CHARACTERS, and CIRCUMSTANCES of Persons before God, we should carefully observe, that in their Light we may know what Judgment to make concerning our SELVES.

GOD's Word gives us clear Distinctions of Persons and Cases, and deals out different Portions for them in due Season. It Jer. 15. 9. *separates the Precious from the Vile; says to the Isa. 3. 10, Righteous, it shall be well with him; and to the Wicked, it shall be ill with him.* And therefore 'tis of great Importance for us to consider, how we are describ'd; to which of the two grand Divisions we belong; into which the Scripture casts the whole World, *Saints and Sinners*; those that are in Christ, born again by the Renewing of the Holy Ghost, and those that are still in their Sins; and, how far its Accounts of the different Circumstances of Persons, in either of these States, agree to us.

'Tis melancholy to think, how many abuse the Scriptures, and themselves, for want of this



this Acquaintance, and either make no Appli-<sup>SHAME. II.</sup>cation of them to themselves at all; or what's as bad, or worse, make a false one.

'Tis for want of this Acquaintance, that so many *deluded Sinners* thank God, with the *Pharisee*, for what they are perfect Strangers to; that they count themselves new Creatures, while they retain their old Natures; that they call God their Father, while they are Children of Wrath as much as ever; and that under these Mistakes they speak Peace to themselves, while the Word of God speaks a dangerous War; and claim the Comforts of the Gospel as their due, while the Terrors of the Law, aggravated by their guilty Neglects and Abuses of the Gospel, are like to be their only Portion.

'Tis for want of this Acquaintance, that so many *misguided Saints* stand off from God, as if he were their Enemy, while he is in Truth their Father and Friend; that in Consequence hereof they frequently speak the Trouble and Confusion to themselves, which there is no Ground for; and refuse the Comforts, which they ought to claim; frighten themselves so much with the dismal Prospects of a Hell, from which the Scripture says Christ has deliver'd them, and are so often overwhelm'd at the apprehended Loss of a Heaven, which God has promised in his Covenant shall be theirs for ever.

'Tis for want of this Acquaintance, when the State is in some Measure known, that so many Saints and Sinners *misplace* themselves so much to their Disadvantage, which ever way the Extreme lies, that they run into: That the *Sinner* on the one Hand *extenuates* his Iniquities, where the Word calls for Aggravation, as one Branch of true Repentance; or *aggravates* them beyond Scripture Bounds, to the Dis-



**II.** Disparagement of those Perfections and Coun-  
sels of God display'd in Christ, that should  
encourage his Repentance. And that the  
Saint on the other, either *assumes* to himself  
what he has not yet attain'd to, or *disowns*  
what he has; and hereby either unduly mag-  
nifies himself, while, perhaps, he thinks he is  
honouring Grace; or robs God of the Honour  
of what he has done for him, under the de-  
ceiving Airs of a false Humility.

AND, tis for want of this Acquaintance,  
that there is so much Excess, Defect, or other  
Irregularity in the Saint's or Sinner's *Passions*,  
their Hopes or Fears, Desires or Aversion,  
and the like; and so much Indolence and De-  
lay, Inconstancy, and want of Resolution in  
point of Purpose, Action and Practice, while,  
whatever Sense they have of the State they are  
in, and the Characters they bear, they are ne-  
vertheless ignorant of the melancholy, or en-  
couraging *Circumstances*, that the one or the  
other are attended with.

You should therefore impartially search the  
Scriptures, and never desist from the impor-  
tant Search, till on Scripture-Evidence you  
can determine to your Satisfaction, what your  
State and Condition is for Eternity: Whe-  
ther a Work of Heart-changing Grace has  
passed upon you, or no: Whether you are  
a true Believer in Jesus Christ, a hearty  
Lover of him, and a willing Servant to him,  
or no: Or, whether you are one that  
fears the Lord, or one that fears him not.  
Read and ponder the Saint and the Sinner;  
the sincere Believer, and the designing or the  
deluded Hypocrite, as the Scriptures have di-  
stinguished and described them. Observe how  
it draws the Figure of different Sorts of Hear-  
ers,

ers, and represents the different Impressions SEEM. II. and Effects of the Word upon them severally. And take Notice of the Difference there is in the Principles they act on, in the Ends they aim at, in the Motives they are influenced by, in the prevailing Tempers of their Minds, in the habitual Propensions of their Hearts, and in the Course of their Lives, as the Scriptures represent them severally. And then consider, as in the Presence of God, which of these describe your State before him.

WITH the like Views examine the Scripture Account of the different Ranks, or Degrees of Saints and Sinners; that, if you find your selves in the List of Sinners, in a State of Nature, still under Wrath and Condemnation, you may know what still more particular Character of Sinners you come under: Whether you are to be number'd among the hardened, careless, presumptuous, self-sufficient, daring and resolute Sinners; or, among the convinced, relenting, self-diffident, broken-hearted, hungry and thirsting Sinners, and consequently, may the better know how to proportion your Fears and Hopes to the Danger you are in, and the Encouragements that lie before you. Or that, if you discover your selves to be enroll'd in the happier List of Saints, in a State of Grace and Acceptance with God in Christ to Eternal Life, you may judge of your Proficiency or Declensions in the several Graces, Duties, and Comforts of the Christian Life, or in any Particulars of them; and what Occasions you have for deeper Abasement, or greater Thankfulness, and more vigorous Action, from the different Motives, which the Consideration of your improving or declining Circumstances may afford you.

SERM. II. 6. SUCH Things as agree to our OWN State, Characters, and Circumstances thus discover'd, we should APPLY TO OUR SELVES, that we may be suitably influenced by them.

THE Design of the former Rule is to assist us in our Observance of this. When therefore the Scripture describes Persons by the State they are in, or by any particular Characters and Circumstances of it, that agree to us, as we should put our Names in, as the Persons to whom such Passages in the most peculiar Manner belong; so what they say to such, we should carefully apply to our selves, that they may have their proper Weight with us.

You that find your selves to be still in your Sins, should seriously consider the Account the Scripture gives of the exceeding *Sinfulness* of such a State; of the provoking Guilt that lies upon the Sinner, the original Righteousness he has lost, the loathsome Corruption that spreads all over him, and the numberless repeated Transgressions, which must attend a Continuance under such Guilt, such Want of Righteousness, and such Corruption: And should join hereto its awful Account of the *Misery* intail'd on such Sinfulness, and the *Danger* it exposes the Sinner to; of the Favour and Communion he hereby loses with God, the Slavery, Deformity, and Confusion, he brings upon himself; the flaming Wrath, and direful Curse that hangs over him, and his liableness, every Moment, to be stripp'd of all the Comforts, and subjected to all the Miseries of this Life, and to the still heavier Strokes of avenging Justice, in all the Horrors of Death, and Agonies of Hell for ever. All this you should solemnly reflect on with



with Application to your selves; Thus exceeding sinful am I, thus extremely miserable am I like to be; yea, *must be*, unless recovered from that Sin, which is my only Danger, and the proper Cause of all this Misery. Serm. II.

To such Conviction, with Application still to your selves, you should add, as its Account of the utter Impotence the Sinner is under to recover himself from this woful State, together with his Unworthiness that God should recover him, that you may not be self-confident, self-sufficient, and vainly presumptuous on the one Hand, as if you could retrieve all at Pleasure, or recommend your self to the Favour of God to do it for you: So likewise its Account of the rich Provision, notwithstanding, made in another, to balance against that Impotence and Unworthiness in ones self, that you may not despair of Mercy, or sink under the Load of your Iniquities, and consequently, either like one quite dispirited, like one desperate, and resolv'd to be careless and unconcern'd, may not cast off Enquiries after a Recovery, as if it were impossible; even by the Grace of God, on the other.

You should consider the joyful Tidings it brings you of a Saviour, every way suitable to your wretched, lost, and helpless State, of his having come from Heaven on purpose to save all Sorts and Degrees, even to the Chief of Sinners; of what he has done and suffer'd on Earth in a Way of Atonement, and is now doing in Heaven in a Way of Intercession for Transgressors: What plentiful Encouragements, what gracious Calls, what tender Expostulations, what free and friendly Invitations, what endearing Commands, what alluring Promises, and what glorious Examples,

all



**Item. II.** all speaking aloud his Sovereign, rich, and plenteous Mercy, it contains: What indispensable Need of him, of his Blood, Righteousness, and Spirit, to pardon, justify, enlighten, and renew you, it represents; and what unavoidable reeking Vengeance it denounces on those, that refuse all this Grace, to enforce your Applications to him. And finally, what Displays it is fill'd with of his Faithfulness, and Divine Sufficiency, as well as Compassions, Inclinations, and Readiness to save, that there might be no room left for Excuses or Exceptions, as if he wou'd reject any, that in the Distress of their Souls seek a whole Salvation in him.

ALL these solemn and engaging Discoveries you should impartially consider, and seriously lay to Heart, till by the Grace that attends them, they effectually reach your inmost Parts; till they awaken repenting Sorrows within you, till they melt you, till they win upon you, till you find your selves on the Wing to welcome the glad Tidings of great Joy, eager to embrace a Saviour thus needed, and thus recommended, till you have by an humble, and yet lively Faith, thrown your selves upon him, and yielded up your selves to him; till Sin and you are at the utmost Variance, and your Hearts, your Affections, your Resolutions, and your Ways are thoroughly turn'd to God through him, and till you are well assur'd, that you have a firm unshaken Interest in him.

On the other Hand, you that find in your selves good Hope through Grace, that you are in Christ pass'd from Death to Life, should seriously consider the Account the Scripture gives of God's *free distinguishing Grace,*

Grace to such, in the complicated Privileges Scam. II. he bestows upon them on one Hand; and of their multiply'd Obligations, attended with a Variety of Cautions and Arguments to guard and enforce them, on the other.

You should observe its Account of the vast Expence he has been at, of the Abundance he has done in their Behalf, and the rich Advantages that accrue to them thereby; of the many fearful Evils such are immediately deliver'd from, and the many invaluable Blessings they are immediately invested with; of the continual Decline of all those Evils that still remain, and continual Flow of all those Blessings they farther want; of the complete Rescue to be wrought in a little Time for them from the one, and full Enjoyment to be granted to them of the other, when they come to be possess'd of the glorious Inheritance reserved in the Heavens for them; and of the Covenant Securities God has given them in Christ, for all these in their proper Order, Time, and Way, till all the Promises in their Favour shall have their utmost Accomplishment. All this you should chearfully survey with Application to your selves: All this Expence has God been at, and all this has he done for me: All these tremendous Evils am I deliver'd from, or shall be in due Season: All these plentiful Blessings are, or will be my Portion: And all the great Securities of God's Covenant are mine, they plead my Safety and my Happiness, that I shall not be stripp'd of what I have, nor disappointed of what I hope for according to the Covenant.

But you should solemnly consider likewise, as I hinted, its Account of the many necessary and delightful Obligations, that lie on such, to  
Pu-

**SER. II.** Purity and Holiness, Duty and Service, Zeal and Fervor, Gratitude and Love, that is, to improve the Grace he gives them to his Glory, to their own Stedfastness, Growth, and Perseverance, and to their abounding Usefulness to all others, as he gives them Opportunity; of the *Cautions* added to these Demands against Presumption, Self-Confidence, and Unbelief, on one Hand; against Indolence, Carnality, and worldly Mindedness on the other; and against Unthankfulness, Declensions, and Backslidings, on both; and of the pressing *Arguments* it is throng'd with to enforce both Demands and Cautions: And all this with Application still to your own Consciences: These Obligations lie on me, and indispensably bind me: These Cautions I need, and must attend to: And it can't but be highly disingenuous, as well as otherwise criminal and dangerous, if all the powerful Arguments that infinite Wisdom, Authority, and Love, have united to enforce every Duty, don't work in some prevailing Degrees upon me.

ALL these endearing Privileges, and inviolable Obligations, where-ever you find them in the Scriptures, you should impartially apply to your selves, and charge upon your Consciences, till you are melted, and commanded into Admiration, Love and Praise; till you are efficaciously excited to depart from all Iniquity, and to make the best Returns for such plenteous and distinguishing Grace; till you act up as much as possible to your holy Character, Profession, and Obligations; till all the valuable Ends of the Believer's Life may be answered with good Success; till you become Blessings to the Church and the World while

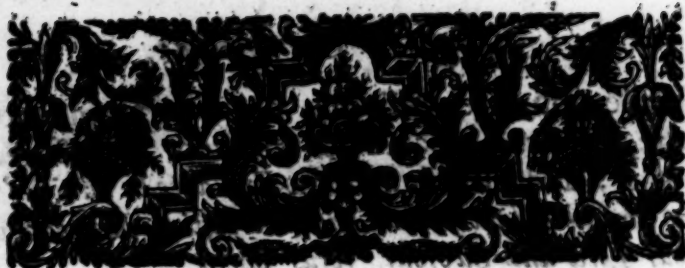


while you live; till you be always ready to <sup>SERM. II.</sup> die, always prepar'd for Heaven, and assured of it; and till at length an *Entrance be minister'd* <sup>2 Pet. i.</sup> to you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of <sup>11.</sup> our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

AND both of you, you that are Blessed with this happy Change, and you that still remain in your sinful State, should carefully consider, with Application to your selves, what the Scriptures say to those, whom it describes by *different Characters*, and *Circumstances* under either of these States, as they are represented to be more or less criminal, and threatening on one Hand, or inoffensive and encouraging on the other, till they have all the desirable Effects upon you, which they are adapted and design'd to produce by the Operation of Divine Grace in their Application to such respectively.

BUT, as something of this Nature will again fall in our Way as we proceed, I shall wave any further Enlargement here; and only add at present, That if we were thus to consider our Selves in the Light of God's Word, and that Word with Relation to our Selves, we should the better know how to use and apply it to the most valuable Purposes. This is the first Step to our profiting by it. And if the Lord shall graciously help the Application by his Spirit, it will succeed to saving Advantage. Let us therefore look to him for Light and Influence in all our Converses with his Word; and let us mind our own State and Circumstances, observe how they are describ'd, and apply to our selves all that we meet with in that Word suitable thereunto, that we *through Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures may have Hope*:





## SERMON III.



ROM. xv. 4.

*For whatsoever Things were written  
afore-time, were written for our  
Learning, &c.*

SERM. III.



HAVE given you *Six general Rules*, about the *Use* we should make of the *Scriptures*, though they were mostly written on special Occasions, or with an immediate Relation to some particular Persons or Societies. We are now,

Secondly, To consider it in a more particular Manner.

In order to this it may be proper to range the Contents of the Scripture into some principal

## *The Use of Scripture Histories, &c.* 67

pal Heads, and suggest a few brief Hints of SERM. III. the Use we may make of them severally. Let us therefore begin with;

### *I. ITS Histories and Examples.*

A VERY good Use may be made of the *Historical* Parts of Scripture to lead our Observation, affect our Hearts, and influence our Lives. In the Sacred History we may see much of God and of our selves; strong Lineaments of his infinite Majesty and Perfections, and of the Weakness and Degeneracy of Human Nature. We may observe his Eternal Power and Godhead in the History of the *Creation*, and many beautiful Turns in his Dealings with his People, and others, through several Ages, in the History of *Providence*.

THE History of the Fall, of the Wickedness and Punishment of the old World, of the early Corruptions and Confusions after the Flood; of *Sodom's* Sin and Conflagration; of *Joseph's* Brethren; of the Unbelief, Murmuring, and Idolatry of *Israel* in the Wilderness; and of their multiply'd grievous Revolts in the Land of *Canaan*, together with God's manifold Judgments upon them, till at length he sent them into Captivity, sets before us the monstrous Deformity of Human Nature, the great Evil of Sin, what fearful Work it makes in the World, and how the Indignation of God flames out against it. And this should fill us with the utmost Abhorrence of all Sin, should awaken solemn Thoughts of a future Judgment, should make us humble, watchful, and depending, and afraid to provoke the Lord, and should raise our Esteem of an atoning Sacrifice, and of recovering Grace.

THE History of God's preserving *Noah* and his Family in the Ark, of his peculiar

SER. III. Kindness to *Abraham*, and remarkable Care of him in a strange Land; of his preserving and exalting *Joseph* in *Egypt*, and providing by his Means for the whole House of *Jacob*; of their wonderful Increase under all their Oppressions in *Egypt*; of their stupendious Deliverance from their pursuing Enemies through the *Red Sea*; of their safe Conduct by a long Train of Miracles through the Wilderness to the Promised Land; of their Settlement, and multiply'd Preservations there; and of their Restoration to it again, after they had been banish'd from it for their Sins. These Things enlarge our Views of God's universal Dominion for the Good of his Church, and of his Sovereignty in the Exercise of it. They shew us how his Kingdom rules over all, how he raises up one and casts down another; has all Hearts in his Hands, and serves his own Purposes by over-ruling the Passions, Artifices, Deceits, and all the Corruptions of Men, without putting any Force upon their natural Freedom, or staining the Purity of his own Holiness. Who can read those Histories, and not observe

Job 5. 12. how he *disappoints the Devices of the Crafty, so that their Hands can't perform their Enterprize;*

Psal. 76. 10. and how he makes the *Wrath of Man to praise him, and restrains the Remainder of it?* They

shew us how he humbled, and proved his People, tried their Faith and Patience, Love and Obedience, led them in a right Way, and did them good in their latter End; and how steadily the whole Series of his Government wrought through a Cloud of unlikely Means to usher in the great and glorious Things of the Gospel. They demonstrate to us, that nothing is too hard for the Lord to do; that he takes Care of his People, and has a Favour for his

his Heritage, notwithstanding all their Unworthiness; and that he is rich in Mercy, slow to Anger, and ever-mindful of his Covenant. And they should deeply affect our Hearts with Thoughts of the vast Views of abounding Mercy, which he has been all along carrying on for these latter Ages; should spirit up our Admiration, Love and Praise, and encourage us to cleave to him with full purpose of Heart, and to put our Trust in him for all that we need for this World and a better. *These Works of the Lord* Psalm III.  
*are great, sought out of all those that have Pleasure therein.*

ALL the Histories the Scripture gives us of Men's different Behaviour, whether Good or Evil, toward God and one another, shew us how naturally propense we are to act sinfully, and how careful we should be, and what need we have of supernatural Grace to enable us, to behave dutifully in our several Stations. And all its Histories of the Mercies and Judgments God has shower'd down from on high in numerous Instances, are a Lecture upon the great Maxims of his Government; they shew us the ordinary Way of his Dealings with the Sons of Men, especially with his own People, and may awaken our Expectations of the like in like Circumstances. The Man that duely observes these Things must say, *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; Verily he is a God that judgeth in the Earth.* Hence Asaph's sinking Faith and Hope were upheld in a Time of great Distress, by a Review of what God had formerly done for his People in like Difficulties, saying, *I will remember the Tears of the Right-Hand of the most High; I will remember the Works of the Lord: Surely I will remember thy* Psalm 77.  
10, 11.



*Sept. III. Wonders of old.* And all those Things were recorded for future Ages; They were written for the Generations to come, that a People that should be created might praise the Lord.

*Psalm. 102.*  
18.

THE History of our *Blessed Lord*, in his Incarnation, Life, Doctrine, Miracles, Sufferings, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven, opens before us the Glory of the Gospel; and gives us a Train of Evidence for the Confirmation of it. It shews us who and what he is, God-Man, and the Saviour of lost Sinners, who taught them by his Word and Spirit, gave himself a Ransom for them, and set up his Spiritual Throne and Kingdom amongst them. It brings us to an Acquaintance with Christ, and with the Glory of God in him, which is what he most of all delights to display, which it most of all concerns us to know, and which out-shines, in amiable Light, all other Manifestations of God to the Creature. It teacheth us what a great, condescending, and gracious Saviour he is; how he finished the Work his Father gave him to do, was accepted in it, triumph'd over all the Difficulties that lay in his Way, is All-sufficient, and every way suitable for our Help, faithful, compassionate, and willing to save all Sorts of Sinners that come to him, and to the Father by him. And it encourages and obliges us to believe, and trust in him for everlasting Life, to pay the highest Honour, Worship, and Obedience to him, as God; to be thankful for him, and to him as Mediator; to admire and love him with the most pure exalted Affections, to make all our Applications to God, and to form all our Expectations from God, alone through him. Hence we are assured toward the Conclusion of this most

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excellent History, that *these Things are written*, SEAM III.  
*that we might believe that Jesus is the Christ,*  
*the Son of God, and that believing, we might have* John 20.  
*Life through his Name.* 31.

THE History of the *Apostles*, of the extraordinary Gifts of the Holy Ghost conferred upon them; of their Doctrines, Labours, Integrity, Self-denial, Sufferings, Miracles, and Success, is a farther Confirmation of the Truth of the Gospel. It gives us unanswerable Evidence, that Christ's Promises and Predictions were made good concerning himself, the Mission of his Spirit, the great Things his Disciples should do, the Enlargement of his *own*, and the Destruction of *Satan's* Kingdom, with many other Particulars of great Moment. And it shews us, that God interests himself in Christ's Cause, takes Care of his Servants, assists and owns them in his Work, and makes his Gospel his Power unto Salvation, to every one that believes. The Apostles were Christ's *Witnesses, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, A&S 1. 8.* and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost Part of the Earth. And his Design in making them Witnesses to him was, that others *might believe* John 17. *on him through their Word,* under the Influence 20. of his Intercession for them.

THE History of the *different States of the Church*, as to its Constitution, Laws, Privileges, Worship, and Discipline, *before the Law, under the Law, and since the Law*, is a glaring Evidence that God alone has all along been King in his Church, that it entirely depends in all its Concerns on him; that all its Laws and Ordinances derive from his Authority, tye us down to a punctual Observation of the Pattern he shews us, and can be repealed, added to, improved, or any way altered, by none

*Sc. III.* but him. It shews us, how far, and in what Particulars, any of his Institutions are now binding to the Church, and what is the Nature of that Dispensation, under which we live. It displays the Condescensions of God to the Wants and Weaknesses of his People, and his manifold Wisdom in suiting the Methods of his Communion with them to their Tempers and Capacities, and in gradually introducing the Glories of their last and best Settlement with the greatest Advantage.

THE History of the *low*, weak, dark, and bondage State of the Church under the *Law*, serves as a Shade to set off with the greater Life and Beauty, its Spirituality, Purity, Light and Grace, and its Liberty, Love, Holy Boldness, and complicated Glories under the Gospel. It teaches us to discern the Things that differ, helps to raise our chearful Gratitude, that our Lot is fallen under that Administration of Christ's Kingdom, which exceeds in Glory, and consists of Things that cannot be shaken, but will remain to the Consummation of all Things; and should fill us with a blushing Shame, that under all our Advantages we should fall short in many Things, of that fervent Temper of Heart toward God, of that Zeal for his Glory, and of that Delight in his Word and Ordinances, which some, even under that defective Dispensation, were eminent for.

AND the History of the *improved* State of the Church under the Gospel, of its unaffected Simplicity, Growth, and Spread; of its Temper, Privileges, and Immunities; and of all its other Advantages, as far as they are represented in the New Testament, serves to distinguish it from the Kingdoms and Civil Societies of



## Histories and Examples.

73

of this World, and from such Churches as SERMON III. owe their Birth and Establishment, Faith, Worship and Order, to the political Contrivances, the Ambition, Covetousness, and Authority of Men; to give us just Sentiments of the Boundaries, Matter, Form, and Officers, of particular Churches; of the Sacred Authority by which, and Ends for which, they were instituted; of the Spiritual Powers and Privileges lodged in them, and Obligations laid on them; of the Blessing and Presence of Christ that may be expected with them; of the evangelical Means by which alone they are to be propagated and encreased, kept pure and edified; and of the Love and Communion, Forbearance and Peace, that should be cultivated among them; to invite those, that are fit for their Communion, to enroll themselves in such of them as are constituted most according to the truly Primitive Pattern; and to confirm and strengthen those in Christ's Ways, that are already join'd to them.

THE Records of *Prayer*, and *Answers to Prayer*, are likewise full of useful Instruction to us. The Prayers God's People have been wont to make to him at stated Seasons, and on all Emergencies, are so many Intimations to us of our continual Dependence on him, and of the Need we have of his Grace to work all our Works in us and for us, to supply our Wants, to defend us from Evil, to direct our Way, to influence our Minds and Hearts, and to perform all Things for us. They assure us that this is a becoming, useful, binding, and generally received Part of Worship, and instruct us to order our Addresses in such a Manner, as is suitable to our Circumstances, and to the Gospel State. And the Records we have



**Psalm III.** have of God's being a God hearing Prayer, and answering earnest, humble, and believing Applications to him in numberless Instances, are a comfortable Evidence to us, that 'tis not in vain to pray unto him, with Faith, in the Name of Jesus Christ. They furnish us with Pleas, and fill our Mouths with Arguments; they invigorate our Spirits to a holy Importunity and Fervor in Prayer, assist our Faith, and encourage our Hopes of a gracious Answer. Hence the *Psalmist* concludes an affecting History of Prayers, and of remarkable Answers to Prayer, with this Reflection,

**Psalm 107.** *Whofo is wise, and will observe these Things, even they shall understand the Loving-Kindness of the Lord.* Of what singular Encouragement may Observations of this Kind be to a backward

**Psalm 9. 10.** Faith! Hence in another Place he says, *They that know thy Name will put their Trust in thee; for thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* And the Apostle *James* has taught us to make this Use of recorded Instances of God's hearing Prayer, when he alledges *Elias's* Success, to stir up the Christian's Faith and Fervor in it. *The effectual fervent Prayer of a righteous Man availeth much.* *Elias was a Man subject to like Passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain; and it rained not on the Earth by the Space of three Years and six Months. And he prayed again, i. e. that it might rain, and the Heaven gave Rain, and the Earth brought forth her Fruit.*

THE large Accounts of *Spiritual Experiences*, that is, of such Things as have passed betwixt God and the Souls of Believers in his Providences and Ordinances, with respect to the Affairs of this Life and the next, are of extensive Use to us, particularly in the Instances in which

which our Experience corresponds with theirs. SERM. III.  
 We have many recorded Experiences of his gracious Smiles and Influences upon them, and of his righteous Withdrawings from them: Of their lively Exercises of Heart toward him in a Way of Meditation, Prayer, and Praise: Of their Admiration, Faith, Love, and holy Joy; and of their godly Sorrow, Repentance, Self-Abasement, and Lamentings after the Lord: Of their close Walk and Communion with him; and of their Backslidings and Revolts from him: Of his Patience toward them, and of their Frowardness toward him: Of his merciful Returns to them, and of their dutiful Returns to him. These are of Use to give us the most affecting Evidence of the real Excellence and vital Powers of inward Heart-Religion, to fill us with a Holy Fear, and Awe of God, to recommend his Condescension, Forbearance, Faithfulness, and Grace, to true Believers, and to assure us, that a holy Correspondence is restor'd through Christ between God and them. They are of use to humble our Souls before him, to impress them with strong Apprehensions of what *an evil and bitter Thing it is to forsake the Lord*, and to lead us into the tried and proved Methods of Recovery, when we have forsaken him. They are of use to shew us, whether the Darkness and Infirmities, that may at any Time afflict us, are such as God's own People used to complain of, that we may neither give into a flattering Opinion of our selves on one Hand, nor pass an unjust Sentence against our selves on the other. And they are of use to raise our Hopes, that by the same Grace, that has made up the happiest Parts of the Experiences  
 of

*Psalm III.* of others, we may be Partakers of the like. And when we find such Experiences in our selves, it may be a Confirmation to us that they are of God; because they answer the Scripture-Records of what he used to do for his own People. Hence, said David, *Remember me, O Lord, with the Favour thou bearest to thy People: O visit me with thy Salvation.* And the Apostle comforted himself and others with this Reflection, that they experienced the same Faith, wrought by the Spirit of God, which the Psalmist had of old. *We having the same Spirit of Faith, according as it is written (Psalm 106. 4.) I believed, and therefore have I spoken; we also believe, and therefore speak.*

THE numerous Examples of the free Grace of God in Christ to all Sorts of Sinners, even to the vilest of them, are of use to keep the trembling Sinner from Despair, to melt the hardened Sinner into the tenderest Relentings, and to open a Door of Hope to all that have a mind to try for Entrance. *Manasseh, Zaccheus, Mary Magdalene,* and others, are usually mentioned by us as such Examples. And we have several crowded into one Catalogue; where the Apostle, speaking to the *Corinthians*, gives a List of the most flagitious Sinners, who, continuing such, could not inherit the Kingdom of God, and thereupon adds, *such were some of you; but ye are washed, but ye are sanctify'd, but ye are justify'd, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.* Such Instances should be consider'd as Examples of the rich Grace of God, not to countenance any in Sin; but to excite and draw in Sinners to believe in Christ for the Remission of their Sins, and to seek after the same Grace through him for their Recovery and Salvation.

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## Histories and Examples.

77

This Apostle accordingly paints out his own SERM. III  
 Character in the most hideous Colours, as a 1 Tim. 1.  
 Blasphemer; and a Persecutor, and Injurious. 13, 14.  
 But, says he, I obtained Mercy, because I did it  
 ignorantly, in unbelief: And the Grace of our Lord  
 was exceeding abundant, with Faith and Love,  
 which is in Christ Jesus. Surrounded with in-  
 dearing Astonishments at this Grace, he  
 gushes out into Recommendations of it to  
 others, *This is a faithful Saying, and worthy of* Ver. 15.  
*all Acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the*  
*World to save Sinners, of whom I am chief. And*  
 expressly adds, that he was herein an Example  
 for others. *Howbeit, for this cause I obtained* Ver. 16.  
*Mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might shew*  
*forth all Long-suffering, for a Pattern to them,*  
*which should hereafter believe on him to Life ever-*  
*lasting.*

THE Examples of Faith and Patience, Hu-  
 mility, Meekness, Love, Self-denial, Tempe-  
 rance, Heavenly-mindedness, Zeal for God  
 and his Glory, and indeed of all that is Excel-  
 lent and Praise-worthy, are set before us in  
 the Scripture, that we may copy after them.  
 Our blessed Lord is represented as our prin-  
 cipal, and only perfect Pattern, *Who has left* 1 Pet. 2.  
*us an Example, that we should follow his Steps.* 21.  
*And we ought so to walk, even as he walk'd.* 1 John  
 The 2. 6.  
 Apostles, and other Holy Men, are likewise  
 proposed as Examples to provoke us to a gene-  
 rous Emulation; and we are to be Followers of 1 Cor.  
*them, even as they were of Christ, and no farther.* 11. 1.  
 The Author to the Hebrews recommends the  
 Worthies of old to our Imitation in their Faith,  
 when by way of Inference from the noble Ac-  
 count he had given of it, he says, *Wherefore* Heb. 12.  
*seeing we also are compassed about with so great a* 1, 2.  
*Cloud of Witnesses* — Let us run with Patience  
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*Scripture III.* the Race that is set before us, looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith. And the Apostle James mentions Job, and several others, as Examples from whom we should learn Patience. *Take, my Brethren, the Prophets, who have spoken in the Name of the Lord, for an Example of Suffering, Affliction, and of Patience — To have heard of the Patience of Job, and have seen the End of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy. By these, and such like*

James 5.  
10, 11.

Heb. 6. 12. Examples, we are taught to be Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.

AND the Examples of a contrary Temper and Conduct are recorded in Scripture, that we may shun and avoid them, and may neither fall into their Sin, nor share in their Punishment. The Apostle sets several of these before us with this View. *With many of them, viz. the Israelites, God was not well pleased, for they were overthrown in the Wilderness. Now these Things were our Examples, to the Intent we should not lust after evil Things, as they lusted. Neither be ye Idolaters, as were some of them. — Neither let us commit Fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one Day three and Twenty Thousand. Neither let us tempt Christ, as some of them also tempted, and were destroyed of Serpents. Neither murmur ye, as some of them also murmured, and were destroyed of the Destroyer. Now all these Things happened to them for Examples, and they are written for our Admonition, upon whom the Ends of the World are come. Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.*

1 Cor. 10.  
5—12.

AND 'tis worth your while to read and observe the Apostle Peter's Representation with this View of the terrible Examples God made of the fallen Angels; of the Old World; and of Sodom

## Histories and Examples.

79

Sodom and Gomorrha; as well as of the merciful SERM. III.  
Examples he made of Noah and Lot, saving one  
from the Deluge, and the other from the Conflagration, 2 Pet. 2. 4—8. And then to take  
Notice of the Improvement he makes of it, as  
for the Encouragement of the Saint, so for the  
Terror of the Sinner, Ver. 9. *The Lord knows  
how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations, and to  
reserve the Unjust unto the Day of Judgment, to be  
punished.*

WHAT a clear and certain Rule is this to  
direct our Use of the Scripture Histories and  
Examples! This is the Rule by which I have  
proceeded, as the Nature of Things would  
bear, and as well as I could, in all that I have  
offer'd about them. And were we to study them  
more in the Light of this Rule, we should cer-  
tainly find the *Historical* Parts of Scripture of  
much greater Importance to us, than we ordi-  
narily apprehend them. Let us next consider,

2. THE *Scripture Chronologies, Genealogies,*  
and *Geography*, or the Account the Scripture  
gives us of different *Times, Families, and Coun-*  
*tries.*

(1.) ITS *Chronology*, or Account of *Times*,  
is of Use to assure us, That the World had a  
Beginning, and when; to ascertain the Truth  
of its own Histories; to determine the Ac-  
complishment of some of its Prophecies; to  
shew the Distance of Time between its Predi-  
ctions and their Accomplishments; and to  
mark out the Periods, in which God's infinite  
Wisdom gradually made Light to arise and in-  
crease toward the Fulness of Time, when  
Christ should come; and how by suitable De-  
grees he prepared and wrought up his Church  
in their State of Non-Age, for the Reception  
of the Messiah.

THE

## 80 The Use of Scripture Genealogies;

**SECT. III.** THE first Light concerning Christ dawn'd immediately after the Fall in the first Promise, that he should be the *Seed of the Woman*, and should *bruise the Serpent's Head*. This was, by *Scripture Chronology*, about *Four Thousand Years* before he appear'd in the *Flesh*. \* About two *Thousand* and one *Hundred Years* after this, God made his Promise more determinate, and confin'd it to *Abraham's Loins*, and pronounced it with some farther Evidence and Advantage, that *in his Seed all the Nations of the Earth should be blessed*, and that *in Isaac his Seed should be called*, which was repeated to *Isaac his Son*; and to *Jacob his Grandson*. About two *Hundred and Thirty Years* after it was first made to *Abraham*, it was still more specially determined to the *Tribe of Judah*, with an Assurance, that the *Scepter*, or Civil Government, *should not depart from it*, till the Great *Shilo* should come. About two *Hundred Years* after this, *Moses* spoke of him as the great *Prophet*, that *should be raised up to Israel*, and many typical Ordinances were instituted to prefigure Christ, and to lead their Faith to him in their stated Worship. Towards *five Hundred Years* after this, the Promise of Christ was farther limited to the *Seed of David*, who was an eminent Type of him, and spoke more of him, as to his Dignity, Dominion, Priesthood, and Sufferings, than all that had gone before him. About *three Hundred Years* after *David*, other Prophets, and particularly *Isaiah*, wrote such clear Prophecies, as look more like History, than Prophecies of Christ, relating to the Divinity of his Person, his extraordinary miracu-

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\* Vid. *Echard's Ecclesiast. History*, Vol. 1. pag. 32. &c.  
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lous Birth according to the Flesh; the Nature of his Kingdom, the Contempt he should be treated with, his Miracles, Preaching, Sufferings, and Death, as a substituted Sacrifice for Sin; his Burial, and his Resurrection from the Dead, and his Triumph over all his Enemies. Cotemporary with *Isaiah*, and between his Time and the End of the *Babylonish* Captivity, which was about *two hundred Years*, several other Prophets arose, and spoke farther of his divine Characters, of his Fore-runner, *John the Baptist*, of his springing in his humane Nature from the House of *David*, and from a despised Branch of his House; of the unlikely Place of his Birth, *Bethlehem* Hag. 2. 7. *Ephratah*; of his coming into *Zerubbabel's* Temple, and filling it with Glory, and of his being cut off at length, *but not for himself*; of his finishing Transgression, making an End of Sin, making Reconciliation for Iniquity, and bringing in an everlasting Righteousness, and putting a total End to the *Jewish* Polity, Church-State, and Worship, at the final Destruction of *Jerusalem*; with many other strong Hints concerning him. And the Prophet *Daniel* foretold that *from the going forth of the Commandment to restore and build Jerusalem*\*, (which Dan. 9. probably means *Artaxerxes's* Commandment to *Ezra*, in the seventh Year of his Reign, about *twelve* or *thirteen* Years after the Expiration of the Captivity) that from that Time to the Death of Christ should be *Seventy Weeks*, that is, reckoning according to Prophetick Style, a Day for a Year, or a Week for seven Years, four hundred and ninety Years.

\* Vid. *Prideaux's Connection*, Vol. 1. Page 288. &c.



**SECT. III.** **HEB. I. 1.** **Thus** by the *Chronology* of the *Old Testament* we see how God at sundry Times spoke by the *Prophets* with growing Evidence, till at last he spoke by his Son : And this Evidence was so strong at the Time of his Birth, that there was then a general Expectation that the *Messiah's* appearing was at Hand.

**LUKE 2. 1, 2.** **Chap. 3. 1, 2, 3.** **VER. 23.** **MAT. 26. 57. & 27. 2.** WE have likewise in the *New Testament* an Account of the Time when Christ was born, that 'twas when *Cesar Augustus* sent out a Decree, that all the World should be taxed, and when *Cyrenius* was Governor of *Syria* : An Account of the Time when *John the Baptist*, Christ's Fore-runner, appear'd, which was in the *fifteenth Year* of the *Reign* of *Tiberius Cesar*, *Pontius Pilate* being Governor of *Judea*. An Account of Christ's Age, that he was entering into, or began to be about *thirty*, when he was baptized and began his Ministry. And distinct Accounts of all the *Passovers* that were during the Time of his Ministry, in the *fourth* of which he was crucify'd, when *Caiaphas* was High-Priest, and *Pontius Pilate* was the Roman Governor.

THESE Chronological Accounts were exceeding proper to shew, how exactly the antient Prophecies were accomplished with Respect to Christ's Coming before the second Temple was destroyed, and just as the Civil Polity of the *Jews* was expiring; and with Respect to his Fore-runner, that was immediately to go before him. And they are of great Use to satisfy us, by a careful Computation of Things, that *Daniel's four hundred and ninety Years* critically terminated at the Death of Christ, and that *Christ our Passover* was then sacrificed for us; with several other Things of that Kind, which are to the everlasting Credit of the Christian

Christian Religion, to the great Establishment SERM. III. of our Faith, that Jesus of *Nazareth* is indeed the Christ, and to the evident Confutation of the *Deist* and *Jew*.

The rest of the Chronology of the New Testament is of Use to shew, how other Predictions were fulfill'd in their proper Seasons; how *speedily* the Gospel spread and prevailed, by the divine Power that attended it, and to give us the Pleasure of observing how in the Compass of a few Years it triumph'd over all the vile, the brutal and malignant, the artful and outrageous Powers of this World that were then in Being.

(2.) Its *Genealogy* or Account of *Families*, is likewise of Use, to shew how we all sprang from one common Parent, and are originally of *one Blood*; and how God peopled the World, and lengthened out the Ages of its first Inhabitants, that he might stock it the sooner, and furnish it with the better Opportunities of inventing, improving, and communicating, such Arts and Sciences as might serve its Necessities, Convenience, and Delight; and of handing down both the Sacred and Civil Histories, before the Art of Writing was invented. They entertain us with agreeable instructive Views, how God took Care for the Preservation of Human Nature in the Ark, how he divided the Nations after the Flood, and how he fulfill'd the Prophetick Blessings and Curses, first to *Noah's* Sons, and afterwards to *Esau* and *Jacob*, and to *Jacob's* Sons.

THEY in a very particular Manner furnish us with distinct Accounts of God's Care and Faithfulness in performing his Promises to *Abraham*, with Respect to the innumerable Off-spring he would give him; with Respect

to his Seeds inheriting the Land of Canaan, and with Respect to Christ the promised Seed, that was to descend through *Isaac* from him. 'Tis delightful to observe in the Genealogies, how God concern'd himself in the Preservation of *Nations*, *Tribes*, and *Families*, and has given us Evidence of it, as his Promises pointed them out for the Progenitors of our blessed Lord. We may therein observe how he kept *Israel* distinct from all other Nations, and how he preserved the *Tribes* distinct from one another, especially the Tribe of *Judah* from the rest, and the House of *David* distinct from other Families in *Judah*; that it might be seen what punctual Care he took in his Providence to fulfill, and manifest the fulfilling of, his promissory Prophecies concerning the Lineage of Christ; and that when he came, the Record of these Genealogies might be a Testimonial to him, that he was the *Messiah* all along promised to the Church of old. Accordingly the antient Genealogies are recited in the Evangelists, *Matthew* and *Luke*, to shew that Christ was the Son of *Adam*, and the Son of *Abraham*; of the Tribe of *Judah*, and Family of *David*, according to the Promises. And 'tis a notable Confirmation to us, that our Jesus is indeed the Christ; because 'till he came, some of their Tribes, especially that of *Judah* and the Family of *David* in that Tribe, was kept distinct: But \* since his Coming, all their Tribes and Families are confounded and mixt. And therefore, as far as I see, unless the *Messiah* is already come, he never can come,

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\* Vide Huet. Demon. Evang. Prop. ix. cap. iv. § 14. Pag. 351.



according to God's own Predictions of his SERM. III.  
springing from the Tribe of Judah, and  
House of David.

FURTHERMORE, such as delight in *Pedigrees*, and think it a fine Accomplishment to be able to trace the Families of the Great through a few Generations; if they are sober in their Enquiries, and don't give Heed to *Jewish Fables*, trifling Speculations, or intangling, captious, and unanswerable Questions about *endless Genealogies*, as they are condemn'd by the Apostle *Paul*, they may doubtless find a suitable Employ for their Talents, in tracing the Family of the Prince, of the Kings of the Earth, through so many Generations, up to the first Rise of Human Nature. And we may look over them with the greatest Pleasure, when they lye before our Minds as a Train of Proofs that he according to the Flesh was our Kinsman, of the same Flesh and Blood with our selves; and on that Account fit to be a proper, unexceptionable, and compassionate Redeemer for us.

(3.) ITS *Geography*, or Account of Countries.

THIS gives Abundance of Life and Pleasure to many of its Histories and Genealogies. And the more familiar Acquaintance we have with the Nature and Situation of the Places, where the famous Persons lived, and the great Transactions were managed, that stand enrolled in the Bible; the more we seem to see them, and to be touched with them. By this Kind of Scripture-Knowledge, the Wonders of God recorded there might, in numerous Instances, be magnify'd in our Eyes. We might thereby see with greater Advantage, what surprising Difficulties he carry'd his People through,



**Exod. III.** and guarded them against, in a Way of Miracle, or in the ordinary Conduct of his all-governing Providence; and might be led into a Variety of improving Reflections, that may arise from an Observation of the *small Spot* God's Heritage was confin'd to in the Land of *Canaan* for many Ages; of the distant Countries into which afterwards it was dispersed for its Revolt from him, and to subserve the Propagation of the Gospel in due Time; and of the *wide Spread* he gave it, when his Gospel came to be preach'd to the *Gentiles*, in all the Places that the New Testament gives an Account of. — But to advance to another principal Head.

### 3. SCRIPTURE Prophecies.

These are Predictions of such Events as could not be known before-hand by any but God, and those to whom he revealed them. **Dan. 2. 28.** They give Evidence that *there is a God in Heaven who revealeth Secrets*. And they shew, that the Prophetick Writers had a divine Commission for the Messages they deliver'd in his Name; and especially for such Parts of them, as were to be confirm'd by their Prophecies.

SOME of those Prophecies were set forth in much opener Terms than others, as the Circumstances of Things requir'd. But as they were not given to gratify Curiosity, so their Use and Design were not so much to expose the Particulars of fore-told Events to plain and obvious View before-hand, as to comfort good Men under the Prospects of some happy Days; to make them capable of discerning those Events with Clearness and Certainty, and to give the greatest Advantage to their Faith in the Revealer, when they should come to pass. Hence said Christ to his Disciples,

ciples, when he foretold them of his Death, SERM. III  
 Ascension to Heaven, and Mission of his Spirit from thence, and of the Troubles they  
 should meet with in the World, *These Things* John 16:  
*have I told you, that when the Time shall come, ye 4*  
*may remember that I told you of them. And now Chap. 14.*  
*have I told you before it come to pass, that when it 29.*  
*is come to pass, ye might believe.*

THE Prophecies of the *Old Testament*, which are evidently prov'd to be accomplish'd in the *New*, especially such as relate to the *distinguishing* Characters of the Messiah, are a Confirmation of the divine Authority of those antient Writings, or that they were delivered by Inspiration of God. And the Prophecies of the *New Testament*, especially Christ's own Prophecies of his Death, Resurrection, and Ascension to Heaven, all which the After-Histories concerning him assure us were fulfill'd; and his Prophecies of the amazing utter Destruction of *Jerusalem*, for the Unbelief and Wickedness of the *Jews* in rejecting him; which were afterwards so punctually fulfilled, that their own Historians, and others, who believed not in him, and particularly *Josephus*, drew out the History of those Events in so many remarkable Circumstances, that had he been a Christian, and design'd to shew how exactly they corresponded to Christ's Predictions of them, I think he could not have done it with greater Evidence, or to greater Advantage. These Prophecies then I say are a great Confirmation of the Divine Authority of *Christ's Gospel*. These are conclusive Proofs of all the great Things, that he, and his Apostles by Inspiration from him, asserted concerning himself, and of the whole of that glorious Religion which he is the Author of.

**SECT. III.** For who can believe that God should interpose in his Favour to fulfill, or suffer the fulfilling of his Prophecies, about his own rising from the Dead, ascending into Heaven, and coming to execute Vengeance on the Jewish Nation for their rejecting him, and that as Proofs on which he laid the utmost Stress, of his being that great Messiah, that divine Person, and only Saviour, which he declared himself to be, and demanded their Belief of; unless he had been in Truth all that he challenged as his Due? *Credat Judæus, apellat; non ego.* —

All the Prophecies are of Use to assure us of the Prescience and Predetermination of God about future Events, in which the Acts of free Agents are nearly concern'd; and of his over-ruling Providence to bring them to pass. This Joseph observed to his Brethren, with Respect to the Accomplishment of his Gen. 50. prophetick Dream. *As for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto Good, to bring to pass, as it is this Day, to save much People alive.* The like was observed by the Apostle Acts 2. 23. *Christ, Him, being delivered by the determinate Counsel and Fore-knowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked Hands have crucify'd and slain.* The whole Company of the Disciples concurr'd in this Reflection, when in an Address Chap. 4. to God they said, *Of a Truth against thy holy* 27, 28. *Child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the People of Israel were gathered together, to do whatsoever thy Hand and thy Counsel determin'd before to be done.* The Apostle Paul calls it Chap. 13. *their fulfilling all that was written of him.* And 27, 29. Luke 24. our blessed Lord himself said, *All Things must be* 44.



be fulfill'd which were written ——— concern ——— SERM. III.  
ing me.

THOSE Prophecies that are *already* fulfill'd, distinguish the Living and True God, with a shining Evidence from all other Gods; are a lively Attestation to the Truth and Divine Original of the Scriptures; afford us a great deal of Pleasure and Advantage in comparing the Predictions with the correspondent Events of Things; and establish our Faith and Expectation with regard to those other Prophecies that are still to be fulfill'd; particularly to such as relate to the Destruction of Anti-Christ, the Calling of the *Jews*, and bringing in the Fulness of the *Gentiles*, and the Glorious Days of Light and Love, Peace and Holiness, that shall hereafter be on the Earth.

THE Prophecies of those Things that *remain* to be fulfill'd, encourage our sober and humble search into them, and furnish out Work for Faith and Prayer for their Accomplishments, or, for our Preparedness for them; that we may live in the Expectation of them, and live like those that do expect them, that we may anticipate the Joys of the Glorious Deliverances to be wrought for the Church; and that, if any of those Prophecies should come to pass in our Days, we may be always ready to enter into the attending Joys, and may not be found among the People of God's Wrath, on whom the most dismaying Vengeance will, at the same Time, be executed to their utter Confusion. They should make us watchful to observe the Footsteps of Providence that lead to their Accomplishment: And they will *re-*commend the Events of Things, will discover God's providential Hand in them, with so much the more open Evidence, and will add  
still



**REMARK. III.** still a more lively Confirmation of the Sacred Records to the Ages, in which those Events shall be produced; as they shall find them to be Accomplishments of Divine Predictions about them.

**WE** may make the like Use of Scripture Prophecies, that are *still* to be fulfill'd, as the Prophets of old did (though we must not expect the Inspiration they sometimes were under) of those, that were *then* to be fulfill'd.

**Dan. 9. 2.** *Daniel understood by Books*, and particularly by *Jeremiah's Prophecy*, that *Israel's Captivity* would be *Seventy Years*. And the Prophets themselves diligently enquir'd into the Meaning of some of their own Prophecies, *Searching what, or what manner, of Time, the Spirit of Christ, which was in them, did signify, when it testify'd beforehand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow.* In like Manner we may labour to understand by the Scriptures themselves, what their several unfulfill'd Prophecies mean, and when they are like to have their Accomplishment. Only let us be wise unto Sobriety.

**1 Pet. 1.**  
**10, 11.**

#### REMARK.

**WE** should now go on to some farther Particulars, and practical Inferences from the whole. But I shall close the present Discourse with a brief Remark upon the Structure of the Scripture, as that may be gather'd from the View we have thus far taken of it; and that is, *How admirably it is framed to temper its Divine Original, with the natural Familiarities of Mens speaking to Men.*

**LOOK** into its *Histories*; there are the natural Traces of Human Composure under  
Divine

Divine Guidance, and they have a Mixture SERM. III. of many grand Materials, which none but God could furnish, and of some, which none but he could reveal; as may easily be observ'd in its Account of the *Manner* and *Order* of the Creation. Look into its *Genealogies*, *Chronology*, and *Geography*; they are all deliver'd with the Air of Human Narratives. But consider them in their important Design and Connection with the Things they relate to, and they carry Evidence of a Divine Order to record them, and so lead us to the Veracity of God, as the Ground of the Credit we give to them. A plain Instance of this may be seen in the *Parentage* of Christ, with the *Time* and *Place* of his Birth. Look into the *Prophecies*; and there are peculiar Marks of Deity opening its Secrets to Men in the Language of Men; and yet some of their important Circumstances are shaded under such obscure Expressions, as it was not fit, on the Account of God's moral Government, that we should thoroughly understand, till explain'd by their Events. This appears with respect to some *Persons* and *Practices* that were to bring about the Crucifixion of our Lord.

IN this Frame of the Scripture there is a Mixture of many Things, that none but God could know and reveal, with others that Men might know without a Revelation: And there is a sufficient Security for the Truth of both upon the infallible Authority of God, whose Influence in the Composure may easily be supposed to prevent the Mistakes of Men; though at this Distance of Time it may be difficult for us to make out the Truth of some Particulars deliver'd by them.

SERM. III.

HERE are some Things level and open to the lowest Capacities; and others exalted and intricate enough to employ the most laborious and penetrating Genius with growing Advantage. How divinely Great, and, how humanly Familiar, is this Contexture of the Sacred Oracles! Their *Divinity* darts out some of its Rays with a shining Lustre, to keep up a solemn Reverence in all our Converses with them; and their *familiar* Dress abates the Dread of over-awing Majesty, and invites our freest Access to them: Sure, none but God could be the Author of such a Composition, and nothing could be better fram'd to suit the *common Nature*, and *various Circumstances* of Men. Here is a divinely contriv'd Record, worthy of God to give to Men, and worthy of them to receive from him. O, may we thankfully embrace it, and faithfully improve it, to his Glory, and our own Salvation!

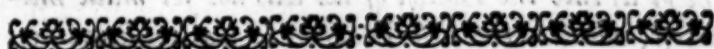


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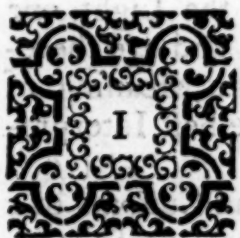


## SERMON IV.



R O M. xv. 4.

*For whatsoever Things were written  
aforetime, were written for our  
Learning, &c.*



SHALL in the next Place give **SERM. IV.**  
a few brief Hints of the Use  
we may make of

4. *ANTIEN T Rites and Cu-  
stoms mentioned in the Scrip-  
ture.*

THESE are of Use, to give us a View of  
the Way of God's governing his People of  
old; how he treated them suitably to their  
State of *Non-Age*, with respect to spiritual  
Things; and suitably to their *political State*,  
with respect to temporal Things. They are  
noble Memorials of Antiquity, and may af-  
ford us many doctrinal and moral Instructions,  
tho' the Use of the Things themselves are ob-  
solete and laid aside.

MANY



## 94 *The Use of antient Rites and Customs.*

SERM. IV.

Heb. 9. 10.

Chap. 10.  
1.

Chap. 9. 8,  
9, 10.

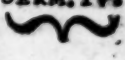
MANY of the carnal Ordinances, as the Apostle calls them, were typical of Christ, and of the Spiritual Blessings of the Gospel-State, as he assures us, when, speaking of the Ceremonial Law, he says, it *had a Shadow of good Things to come*. And speaking of some of its Rites and Customs, particularly of the Priests going into the Tabernacle daily, and the High Priest's entering alone into the Holy Place once a Year, he says, *The Holy Ghost this signified, that the Way into the Holiest of all was not yet made manifest, while as the first Tabernacle was yet standing; which was a Figure for the Time then present, in which were offered both Gifts and Sacrifices, that could not make him that did the Service perfect, as pertaining to the Conscience; which stood in Meats and Drinks, and divers Washings, and carnal Ordinances imposed on them, until the Time of Reformation.*

By comparing antient Types with their Accomplishment in their *Anti-Types*, we see the Wisdom and Faithfulness of God, the Harmony of the Scriptures, and the Light one part of it casts upon another; and are thereby put upon searching into the Meaning of God's Word, by using it as the best Interpreter of it self.

THERE were other Rites and Customs of a moral Tendency. From the antient *Salutations* and *Feasts of Charity*, we may learn the unfeigned Love, the Innocence, the social Friendship, and the great Beneficence, that ought to reign amongst us. Hence the Apostle James, alluding to their Salutation, *Depart in Peace*, severely reproaches those that pretend to Love, but don't act under the Power of that Principle, and really have it not. *If a Brother or Sister be naked, and destitute of daily Food,*

James 2.  
15, 16.

## The Use of antient Rites and Customs. 95

Food, and one of you say unto them, Depart in SERM. IV.  
Peace, be you warm'd and fill'd; notwithstanding   
ye give them not those Things that are needful for the  
Body: What doth it profit? And the Apostle  
Jude, speaking of Persons of vile, opprobri-  
ous, and malicious Tempers, calls them Spots  
in the Feasts of Charity. From the antient Cu- Judev. 12.  
stom of the Wife's covering her self with a Vail,  
especially, when she was first presented to her  
Husband, as *Rebekah* did when she came first Gen. 24.  
to *Isaac*, we may learn the Modesty with which  
the Woman ought to be clothed, the Subjection  
she ought to be under to her Husband, and  
the kind Protection she may expect from him.  
Hence, when the Apostle *Paul* was inculcating  
Things of this kind, he alludes to this antient  
Rite, as significative of them, and says, *The* 1 Cor. 11.  
*Woman ought to have Power* (meaning the To-  
ken of the Husband's Power, the Emblem of  
which was a Vail) *on her Head*. In another  
Place he makes a moral Improvement of that  
antient Custom of the *Jews*, of treading out  
their Corn with the Feet of unmuzzled Oxen,  
by applying it to the Maintenance of the Gos-  
pel Ministry. *Let the Elders that rule well be* 1 Tim. 5.  
*counted worthy of double Honour, especially they who* 17, 18.  
*labour in the Word and Doctrine; for the Scripture*  
*saith, Thou shalt not muzzle the Ox that treadeth*  
*out the Corn; and the Labourer is worthy of his Re-*  
*ward*. And this, he says in another Place,  
was written no doubt for our Sakes, that from the  
Equity of Things we might learn the Justice of  
Ministers reaping temporal, which he calls car-  
nal, Things, from those, for whom they  
spend their Time, their Strength, their Pains,  
and their whole Lives, to sow unto them *spiritual* 1 Cor. 9.  
*Things*. And the antient Rite of *washing others* 9, 10, 11.  
*Feet*, was morally instructive of Purity in all John 13.  
5—17. man-

**SERM. IV.** manner of holy Conversation, and of that Humility, Condescension, and Love, we ought to shew to one another, as our Lord himself apply'd it, to instruct his Servants and Disciples about those Things, on the Occasion of *his washing their Feet*.

THESE Instances shew, that in reading the ancient Rites and Customs with due Reflection, an observing Mind may make many moral Improvements of them for the Conduct of Life; and they warrant a like Use of other Instances we may meet with.

THOUGH many of the ancient Rites of the Jews were only of a civil Nature, and many of them had no Foundation in a Divine Institution (as all their Laws deliver'd by Moses had) yet we may well suppose they were written with some View of Instruction to us, that we may observe what was laudable or reprovable in them; what was the Genius and Temper of that People, and how far any moral Instructions may be gather'd from the Usages among them. But we must always be very careful, that we are sober in our Judgment about them; and that we keep a Bridle upon the Luxuriences of Fancy, in the Improvements we would make of them. Let us next consider,

#### 5. SCRIPTURE Doctrines and Precepts.

THESE run like a precious Mine with rich Variety and Plenty through the Scriptures. They intervene more or less, with every Division into which I have, and still farther may, cast the Contents of the Holy Bible. And yet they are of distinct Consideration, and many of them fill up a great Part of Scripture, which can't be reduced to any of my other Heads. I shall offer a few Hints about the Use of these conjunctly.

THEY



THEY give us a noble View of *Natural* SERM. IV. and *Revealed* Religion in all their Glories. They set those Things with the greatest Evidence and Advantage before us, which we might have had some glimmering Notices of by the Light of Nature; and shew us nobler Principles and Ends, Obligations, Engagements, Motives, and Assistances, for the Observation of them, than natural Light could suggest. They present us farther with a Discovery of such *supernatural* Truths, as suit our fallen State; are of the utmost Importance to us, and cou'd never have been known without a Divine Revelation; and they oblige us to receive them, to submit our Consciences to them on the Credit of a Divine Testimony, and to improve them to all the great Purposes, for which God has reveal'd them. They give us the most exalted, spiritual, and becoming Conceptions of God, and the most exact and touching Idea of our selves. They set out his infinite Perfections and Blessedness in himself, his Relations to us, Dominion over us, Acts concerning us, and Influences upon us; they shew us our Dependance on him, Revolt from him, and Obligations to him; and they direct and demand our Worship and Obedience, suitable to these Discoveries of him and of our selves. They likewise open the amazing *Counsels* of God's Will concerning us, unvail his Glory in the Face of Jesus Christ, display the Riches and Sovereignty of his Grace to us, draw out the Glorious Scheme of Redemption before us; shew us the free, the concurring, and yet distinct Parts, which Father, Son, and Spirit, have undertaken and performed about it, and instruct us how to pay them all Divine Honours suitable to the Manifestations

H

they



SERM. IV. they have therein made of themselves to us.

They give us strong Descriptions of the different Nature of *this World* and the *next*, and demand different Regards to them respectively, that all Things here may be managed with a Reference to the future Judgment, and with a Subserviency to a safe and abundant Entrance into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

THEY are form'd with proper Tendencies to enlighten and perswade the Judgment, and to bind the Conscience; to entertain our Minds with the noblest Views, to impress our Wills and Affections in a manner agreeable to our rational Natures, and to regulate our Lives, that they may shine in the Beauties of Holiness. They are of use to direct and oblige our Faith and Practice; to teach us all that we are concerned to know and believe, and all that we ought to avoid or do, for the Glory of God, our Usefulness to others, and our own present and eternal Happiness.

AND while they mark out our Duty in its full Extent, and set before us the high Obligations we are under to observe it, they shew us another Way, in which we must be justified, and in which all the Obedience we pay becomes acceptable; and that is through Faith in the Lord Jesus, according to that Way of Salvation which they open to us alone through him. They likewise lead us to the Springs of Grace, that are necessary to enable us both to believe in him to everlasting Life, and to live as those, that desire and hope, at length, to obtain it. And all this they recommend to us by the most engaging Motives, and enforce upon our conscientious Regards by the most indispensable Necessity, that a Divine Order can lay upon us.

THEY

## Doctrines and Precepts.

99

THEY are of use to shew us what we are, STAM. IV. what we ought to be, and what, through Grace, we may hope to be, and should labour after. They are suited to convince and convert the Sinner, to bring him to Faith and Repentance, and to change his Heart and Life; as they likewise are to edify and establish the Believer in Faith, Love, Holiness and Comfort, to Salvation. They are admirably framed to make us all wiser and better, more spiritual and heavenly in our Temper and Actings toward God; and more meek, human, and God-like, in our Temper and Actings toward Men. They are useful to make, and keep, us humble; to set God in Christ uppermost in our Hearts, as our chief Good, first Cause, and highest End; to govern our Thoughts, and command our Passions, to direct our Choice, to regulate our Desires and Appetites, to fix, enlarge, and Christianize our Love, to expel or improve our Fears, to raise our Hopes, to promote our spiritual Joys, to subdue our Malice, Wrath, and Revége, to moderate our Sorrows and Anxieties relating to this Life, to engage our Patience, Submission, and intire Devotedness to God in Christ, and to correct all our Errors, and order all our Ways. They are of constant Use in every Condition and Turn of Life, and continue useful to us, when we come to die, and are always to be apply'd, as was hinted before of the whole Scripture in general, to our Direction and Assistance; according as they suit the particular States and Circumstances, in which we are, or at any Time may be. Thus the Apostle Paul apply'd David's Doctrine of Blessedness unto every true Believer; to whom God imputeth Righteousness Rdm. 4. 6,

**Sermon IV.** *without Works, saying, Blessed are they whose Iniquities are forgiven, and whose Sins are covered. Blessed is the Man to whom the Lord will not impute Sin.* And he apply'd the Command, *Thou shalt not covet,* to his own Conviction of Sin. *I had not known Sin,* says he, *but by the Law; for I had not known Lust, except the Law had said, Thou shalt not covet.* We'll now advance a few Remarks on,

#### 6. SCRIPTURE Threatnings and Promises.

THESE are of Use to shew us the strict Righteousness of God on one Hand, and the exceeding Riches of his Grace on the other; the Connection of Sin and Misery, and of Holiness and Happiness, the just Reward of Sin, and the free Reward of Grace; the Danger of rejecting the Counsel of God against ourselves, and the Advantage of entertaining it.

THE Threatnings are of Use to work up on our Fears, and the Promises on our Hopes. The Threatnings to awaken us, and the Promises to encourage us. The Threatnings to convince us of the great Guilt of our Sin, and the Promises to help us against it. The Threatnings to shew us our Misery and Danger, and the Promises to afford us Relief, to direct us to it, and to be the Ground of our Faith and Trust in a promising God through Christ for it. The Threatnings are of Use to affect our Hearts with a deep Sense of what God might justly do against us, and the Promises of what his Grace inclines him, and his Faithfulness engages him to do for us, in the way of the New Covenant. The Threatnings endear the Promises to us, and the Promises comfort us against the Threatnings. The Threatnings are useful to restrain us from all Sin, and the Promises to allure and strengthen



## Threatnings and Promises.

101

strengthen us in all the good Ways of the Lord. The Threatnings put us on flying from the Wrath to come, and the Promises on seeking after eternal Life. The Threatnings are design'd to cut off all Hope from those, that continue to reject Christ, and persist in their Sins; and the Promises to give the utmost Assurance of endless Glory to those that believe in Christ, and turn from their Iniquities to God through him. SERM. IV.

AND here again, what has been observed of the whole Scripture in general, may be observed of these Parts of it in particular, viz. That according as our State and Condition is before God, so we should apply the *Threatnings* or *Promises* to our selves. Thus God's Threatning to Unbelievers among the Jews is apply'd to Unbelievers under the Gospel. To Heb. 3. 18, *whom I sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not? So we see, Chap. 4. that they could not enter in because of Unbelief. 1. 3. Let us therefore fear, lest a Promise being left of entering into his Rest, any of you should seem to come short of it: For unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them; but the Word preached did not profit them, not being mix'd with Faith in them that heard it. And thus God's Promises to Israel, (Lev. 26. 11, 12.) are apply'd to the Christian Church. As God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my People. So likewise his Promise to Joshua (Josh. 1. 5.) is apply'd to all true Believers, as such, to raise their Faith in him, and Submission to his Will. Be content with such Things as ye have: For he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. And what David said in Faith, the Apostle adds, that every Believer, in all his Straits,*



## The Use of Scripture

**SERM. IV.** may take up in the Language of Faith too; so that we may boldly say, *The Lord is my Helper, and* Heb. 13. 6. *I will not fear what Man shall do unto me.* And Promises made to Persons under some peculiar Characters or Circumstances may be apply'd by all others in like Cases. An Instance of which we have in the Application, that is made to the *liberal Man*, of God's Promise 2 Cor. 9. 9. unto such (Psal. 112. 9.) *As it is written, He hath dispersed Abroad; he hath given to the Poor; his Righteousness remaineth for ever.* According to this Rule, all God's Threatnings and Promises should be used with Application to our selves, as far as they suit our Case, or as our Circumstances are like theirs, to whom those Threatnings or Promises were made.

THE unbelieving, impenitent Sinner, should consider all the Threatnings that are made to such, with Application to himself, as setting out his own tremendous State and Condition before God. And by whatever Characters he finds himself more particularly described and threaten'd in the Word of God, with respect to the different Kinds, or Degrees, or aggravating Circumstances of his Sin, his Conscience should fall under the Sentence, and judge for God, that if he continues in those Sins, or Ways of sinning, the dreadful Threatnings shall be unavoidably executed upon himself without Mercy, and God only knows how soon it may be. For Rom. 3. 19. *what Things soever the Law saith, it saith to them that are under the Law, that every Mouth may be stopped, and all the World may become guilty before God.*

IN this Application of the Threatnings, the Sinner should labour to get his Heart deeply impress'd with a Sense of his indispensable Need

## Threatnings and Promises.

103

Need of Christ and Grace, to renew Pardon SERM. IV.  
and save him. And under such Apprehensions  
he should use the *Promises*, that suit his Wants,  
as a Ground of Faith and Hope in God  
through Christ, and as an Encouragement to  
return and apply to him for the suitable Mer-  
cies therein promised. Hence says the Pro-  
phet *Isaiah*, *Seek ye the Lord while he may be* Isa. 55.  
*found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the* 6, 7.  
*Wicked forsake his Way, and the Unrighteous Man*  
*his Thoughts; and let him return to the Lord, and*  
*he will have Mercy; and to our God, for he will*  
*abundantly pardon.* And all the Promises that  
are made to such as are *weary and heavy laden,*  
and *broken in Heart*, to such as *seek after Christ,*  
and the Knowledge of God in him, to such as  
*hunger and thirst after Righteousness,* and *wait up-*  
*on the Lord* in his Ways, or to such as *follow on*  
*to know him, and come unto Christ;* Such Pro-  
mises should be used by the Sinner, as Means  
to stir him up to those Dispositions and Exer-  
cises of Heart, and should be apply'd by  
Faith to himself, so far as he finds himself de-  
scribed by any of those Characters.

THE true Believer should use all the Pro-  
mises made to such with Application to him-  
self, as setting out the abundant Grace of  
God to him; the happy State of Grace into  
which he is brought here, and the inconceiv-  
ably happier State of Glory hereafter, to  
which he shall be kept by the Power of God  
through Faith. He should live by Faith upon  
the Promises, and take in Strength and Com-  
fort from them, to assist and encourage him in  
that constant Course of Dependance, Watch-  
fulness, Love, and Obedience, that is neces-  
sary in the Nature of Things, and by the de-  
clared Ordination of God, for his Preserva-

tion in a State of Grace to eternal Salvation.  
 For God has given us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these we might be Partakers of a Divine Nature, having escaped the Corruption that is in the World through Lust. The Believer's Riches and Securities lie in the Promises, and he may humbly claim Propriety in them, and may safely rely upon them. For all the Promises of God in him [Christ] are Yea, and in him Amen, to the Glory of God. And if we are Christ's, then are we Abraham's Seed, and Heirs according to the Promise.

SEAM. IV.

2 Pet. 1.4

2 Cor. 1.

20.

Gal. 3.29.

HENCE all the Promises made to Believers under various Characters; sometimes of those that trust, hope, or delight in the Lord; sometimes of those that seek, love, fear, or obey him; at other Times of those that repent and turn to the Lord; or, that confess and forsake their Sins; and at others, of such as deny themselves, take up their Cross, and follow Christ, or of such as walk uprightly: All these, and such like Promises, should be apply'd by every one to himself, as he finds any of those Characters belong to him. And by whatever other Character the Believer finds himself described, with Promises annexed to them, with respect to different Graces, or different Degrees and Exercises of those Graces, or with respect to particular Fears or Dangers, Trials or Difficulties of a spiritual or temporal Nature; his Faith should embrace those Promises for his seasonable Help, and his Conscience should judge for God, that the Blessings contained in them are, and shall be performed to himself in due Time and Manner, according to the Promises.

HE may hereupon, as one pass'd from Death to Life, look upon the Edge of the Threatnings as turn'd off from him, take the Com-



Comfort of it, and give Glory to God for it; SERM. IV.  
 and yet may, and ought to use them, as a Bar-  
 rier to defend against his Return to any Ini-  
 quiry; and should press them upon his Con-  
 science, to excite the strictest Caution against  
 all Sin, to awaken all Care against the least  
 Beginnings of Apostacy, and to keep up a live-  
 ly Sense of the necessary Connection there  
 is between Holiness and eternal Salvation;  
 to suppress all presumptuous Confidences, and  
 to make him tender and careful against all  
 Sin. He should make this Use of them, as the  
 Means of preserving him from such Sins, and  
 from such Ways of sinning, as may provoke  
 the Lord to contend in Anger with him, and  
 as are inconsistent with a State of Grace, and  
 have the Threatnings of God's Wrath en-  
 tail'd upon them. This Method the Apostle  
 took to apply the *Promises* and *Threatnings*,  
 when speaking to the believing Romans, he  
 said, *If ye live after the Flesh, ye shall die; but if* Rom. 8.  
*ye through the Spirit do mortify the Deeds of the Bo-* 13.  
*dy, ye shall live.* And when speaking of him-  
 self and others, he said, *It is a faithful Saying;* 2 Tim. 2:  
*for if we be dead with him, we shall also live with* 11, 12, 13.  
*him. If we suffer, we shall also reign with him:*  
*If we deny him, he also will deny us. If we believe*  
*not, yet he abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.*  
 To conclude, let us consider,

7. SCRIPTURE *Cautions, Warnings, Intrea-*  
*ties, Calls, Counsels, Directions, moral Instru-*  
*ctions, and Exhortations.* I put all these together,  
 because they are of a somewhat like Nature and  
 Tendency, and that I may not multiply Heads.

WE have many Instances of this kind of  
 Address in the *Psalms*, *Proverbs*, and *Ecclesi-*  
*astes*; in the Writings of the *Prophets*; in the  
 Discourses of our *Blessed Lord*, and in the pra-  
 ctical



**SERM. IV** *etical Parts of the Epistles.* These are of Use to affect our Hearts with the Long-suffering and Patience of God to such sinful unworthy Creatures as we are; with his wonderful Condescension to Dust and Ashes, with his familiar, friendly Way of treating us, and with his great slowness to Wrath, and Propensions to shew Mercy. They are of Use to recommend to us the Wisdom of God, in accommodating his Ways of speaking to the Make of Human Nature, to the meanest Capacities, and to all Varieties of Tempers; and to touch our Consciences and Passions, as well as to work upon our Judgments. They are useful to convince us of our utter Inexcusableness, if we wilfully reject all his endearing Methods with us, to rouse us from our Slothfulness, to stir us up to the utmost Endeavours after a Compliance with his Will, and to encourage our Hopes of Success in the Attempt; to set before us our Obligations and Engagements in the most moving Manner to hearken and return to him; to humble us for our Defects, to awaken Apprehensions of our Need of pardoning and renewing Grace, and to put us upon making use of Christ for both. And as far as they relate to any Cases, that concern our selves, they are to be used with Application to our selves, that we may be suitably directed and influenced by them.

SEVERAL Texts, that were given for the Direction, Counsel, and Caution of *Israel*, (*Deut. 8. 3. and 6. 13, 16.*) were used by our Lord himself in his own Case, to repel the Assaults of Satan. *He answered, and said, it is written, Man shall not live by Bread alone, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of God.*  
~~Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.~~  
*And,*

— And, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, SERM. IV.  
 and him only shalt thou serve. Several moral In-  
 structions, Counsels, and Cautions, deliver'd  
 by Solomon, (Prov. 25. 21, 22. and 3. 11, 12.)  
 are apply'd by the Apostle Paul to the Chri-  
 stians he wrote to. *If thine Enemy hunger, feed* Rom. 12.  
*him; if he thirst, give him drink; for in so doing* 20.  
*thou shalt heap Coals of Fire on his Head. And ye* Heb. 12:  
*have forgotten the Exhortation, that speaks to you* 5, 6.  
*as to Children, My Son, despise not thou the Cha-*  
*stening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked*  
*of him. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,*  
*and scourgeth every Son whom he receiveth. And*  
*he adds, seeming to refer to what was said by*  
*the Prophet Isaiah (Chap. 35. 3.) Wherefore* Ver. 12.  
*lift up the Hands which hang down, and the feeble*  
*Knees. And the Psalmist's Counsel and Ex-*  
*hortations (Psal. 34. 12—16.) are apply'd*  
*by the Apostle Peter to Christians. He that* 1 Pet. 3.  
*will love Life, and see good Days, let him refrain* 10, 11, 12.  
*his Tongue from Evil, and his Lips, that they*  
*speak no Guile: Let him eschew Evil, and do*  
*Good; let him seek Peace and ensue it. For the*  
*Eyes of the Lord are over the Righteous, and his*  
*Ears are open unto their Prayers: But the Face of*  
*the Lord is against them that do Evil. And what*  
*God spoke in a particular Case to Israel by the*  
*Prophet Isaiah (Chap. 8. 12, 13.) this Apostle*  
*subjoins to these Christians. Be not afraid of* Ver. 14,  
*their Terror, neither be troubled; but sanctify the* 15.  
*Lord God in your Hearts, and be ready always to*  
*give an Answer to every Man, that asketh you a*  
*Reason of the Hope that is in you, with Meekness*  
*and Fear.*

THESE, and such like Instances, teach us  
 to use what God said in this Way to others,  
 with Application to our selves, as far as any  
 Circumstances of our Case are like theirs.

And

*Serm. IV.* And we may improve all those Cautions, Counsels, Exhortations, and Calls, that suit our own State and Condition before God, with the same Advantage, as if they had been spoken at first directly to our selves. Thus we have consider'd the Use we may make of the several Parts of Scripture, though they were mostly written on special Occasions, &c. All the Improvement I shall make of this will lie in two or three Inferences.

## I N F E R E N C E S.

*Infer. 1.* I. WE may infer, *The Unreasonableness of concluding that any Parts of Scripture are useless, because we don't understand of what Use they may be to us.*

IF some Parts of God's Word appear useful to any of us now, which we formerly thought could not be so, as the brief Hints you have heard may possibly satisfy some of you with respect to some Particulars: Why then may we not reasonably suppose, that all its other Parts have their proper and valuable Use too; though we may not yet perceive their peculiar Beauties, or how they are useful, or of what kind of Use they are?

MANY Places appear useful to some, that don't appear so to others. *Whose Judgment* then shall be the Standard of their Usefulness? Many Places that appear, after close Enquiry, to be of no Use to some now, may hereafter appear exceeding useful to the very same Persons: What *State* of the Judgment therefore shall be counted fit to determine, how far the several Parts of the sacred Scriptures may be useful? Light may break out in after Ages upon some Passages, that now lie under great Ob-

Obscurity, as many are doubtless better understood now, than they were in some Ages that are past. Knowledge may still increase by some Occurrences of Providence, and by some farther Influences of God's Spirit upon some eminently great, spiritual, humbly inquisitive, laborious, and enlarged Minds. And the unsearchable Depths of Divine Thoughts, and Conduct in the Frame of the Scriptures, neither are, nor ever can be, thoroughly exhausted, by such dark, feeble, and corrupt Minds as ours are, under all the Disadvantages of the Fall. Where, therefore, shall we pretend to make a *Stand*, and say, there can be no use of the Scriptures beyond what is already discover'd?

If many Things in God's Works are undoubtedly useful unto valuable Ends, beyond what has been hitherto known, or ever may be fully known: If there are many, whose Use has been discovered in later Years, beyond what was formerly understood; and many, whose Use may hereafter be well understood, and improved to the Service of Man, which at present we have no Skill in: Why may we not with equal Justice think the same of God's Word, where his manifold Wisdom, and the unsearchable Riches of Christ, are display'd in such Heights, Variety, and Extent, as afford new Entertainments to *Principalities and Powers*, and give full Scope to their improving Study of them as Things, which they desire to look into? Eph. 3. 9. And if some Things in the System of Nature can't be thoroughly understood, and yet are useful to keep us humble under a Sense of the Weakness of our Faculties; why should we not think the same of a Divine Revelation? Pet. 1. But the more we consult the Holy Scriptures with



**SERM. IV.** with Faith, Love and Reverence, and with earnest Desire to profit by them, the more we shall ordinarily increase in the Knowledge of their Excellence and Advantage ; and the greater Evidence we shall have, that *all the Words of God's Mouth are in Righteousness, there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find Knowledge.*

Prov. 8.  
8, 9.

*Infer. 2. 2. WE may infer, That we have no need of another Revelation from God, besides that which he hath given us in the Scriptures.*

THEY are so full as to all Matters of Faith and Practice, as to all Things that are necessary or useful for us to know, believe, or do ; so admirably adapted to urge and inforce them upon us ; and so suitable to all States and Conditions, Tempers and Capacities ; that there is no need of another Revelation, different from this, or added to this, to answer the great Design of God's Grace, and our own spiritual Advantage, or to promote the Interests of his Kingdom and Glory in the World. These Scriptures are the instituted Means of Knowledge and Grace ; and if their necessary Doctrines are hid to any to whom they are publish'd, *it is only to them that are lost ; in whom the God of this World has blinded the Minds of them which believe not, lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine into them. They are, as far as any external Revelation can be, able to make us wise to Salvation, through Faith that is in Christ Jesus. And as the same Apostle speaks farther about them, though many that we now have, were not then committed to Writing, 2 Tim. 3. they are profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for 15, 16, 17. Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness. That the*

2 Cor. 4.  
3, 4.

2 Tim. 3.

15, 16, 17.

*the Man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished* SERM. IV  
*unto all good Works.*

WE therefore should not expect or desire new Lights, beyond what are contained in the inspired Writings. We have no Warrant from God to look for them; but have Cautions in his Word against them, and Directions to bring all Pretences of that Kind to the *Isa. 8. 10.* Law and to the Testimony, and believe concerning them, that if they speak not according to this Word, it is because there is no Light in them. Hence we are bid to try the Spirits whether they be of God: And to prove all Things, and hold fast that which is good. And that the Scriptures are the Rule or Standard, by which they must be try'd, appears from that solemn Charge to the Churches of Galatia, *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.* We only need to have that which he has given us, set with Evidence before our Minds, impress'd with Power upon our Hearts, and copied out in our Lives.

LET us therefore adore the Fulness and Perfection of the Scriptures, be thankful for them, search into them, and abide by them, as a complete Rule to settle all our Sentiments, and to direct, encourage, and assist our Faith, Hope, Love, and Obedience. And let it be our main Concern, that they may be transcribed in our Hearts, and we may be the living Epistles of Christ, cast into the Mould of that Doctrine which he has delivered to us. We may infer,

3. *The Need we have of the Holy Spirit to enlighten and influence us in an effectual Manner by means of this Revelation.* Infer. 3.

THOUGH

SERM. IV.

THOUGH it is so full and useful, yet sad Experience shows how little we understand many Things contain'd in it; how very ignorant Multitudes are of, and inattentive to some of its plain and important Points, and how little we are inclin'd to use it as we ought. How dark and useleſs doth a great part of it appear to us? And how naturally backward are we to improve and apply what we know of it to our own Advantage? Whose Mind and Conscience is not in some degree still defiled? And who can say, he ſees all Things clearly, or is thoroughly in Love with all that he ſees? And where the Bleſſed Spirit has not ſhed ſome Rays of his Light and Grace, what thick Darkneſs is there in the Underſtanding, and what Madneſs and Enmity in the Will and Affections, with regard to the ſublime and ſacred Truths of the Goſpel? *The Vail* muſt be taken away from our *Hearts*, as well as from the *Objects* propoſed to us, if ever we have a true and ſaving Acquaintance with them. The Blindneſs of our Minds within, as well as the Obſcurity of an external Revelation muſt be remov'd, if ever we know the Truth as it is in Jeſus, and receive it in the Love of it. And the Perverſeneſs, Prejudices, and Averſions of our Hearts againſt it, muſt be remov'd, by the Influence of God's Spirit and Grace, to ſet its Arguments and Motives with Power and Efficacy upon us, if ever we are ſavingly renewed, and turned to God through Chriſt, by what is propoſed in the Scriptures to us; or if ever we are enabled to uſe them to the ſeveral holy Purpoſes, for which they are ſuited and deſigned. Hence David pray-  
 Pfal. 119. ed, *Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law.* And incline my  
 18, 36, 37. *Heart*

*Heart to thy Testimonies, and quicken thou me in* SERM. IV.  
*thy Way.* And the Apostle prayed for the *Ephesians*, that God would give them the Spirit Eph. 1.  
*of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of* 17, 18.  
*Christ.* The Eyes of their Understandings being en-  
 lightened, that they might know what is the Hope  
 of his Calling, &c. And that he would grant them, Chap. 3.  
 according to the Riches of his Glory, to be strengthen- 16.  
 ed with Might by his Spirit in the inner Man,  
 &c.

IN like manner, we should carry about us  
 a humbling Sense of our great want of his  
 Enlightnings and Assistance, to give us a true  
 Acquaintance with his Mind and Will in the  
 Scriptures, and to enable us to reap all spiri-  
 tual Advantages from them. And we should  
 frequently have our Eyes up to him, that by  
 the same Spirit, by which they were indited,  
 they may be opened to us, and impress'd  
 upon us, that he would teach us to profit by Isa. 48. 17.  
 them, to understand and apply them in a right  
 Manner, and to take in by Faith their graci-  
 ous Design to us in their several Parts; and  
 that they may become his Power to our own  
 Salvation.







# SERMON V.

ROM. xv. 4.

— That we through *Patience*  
and *Comfort of the Scriptures*  
might have *Hope*.

SERM. V.



THE former Part of this Text has been already considered, as it asserts the *standing Use of the Scriptures* to the Christian Church in all Ages. We now proceed to this latter Part of the Verse, which represents,

Secondly, *THE Purposes for which the Scriptures are of this standing Use.*

THE Apostle doth not here propose to give a full Account of the Scriptures most extensive Design, but instances only in *one of their*

## The Nature of Scripture Hope. 115

their *principal* Ends, which is *Hope*, and in SERM. V.  
two *subservient* Ends, which are *Patience* and  
*Comfort*, to assist that *Hope*. I shall begin  
with their *principal* End, as that is mention'd  
in our Text. Therefore,

*Ist.* THE Scriptures were written for our  
Learning, *That we might have Hope.* In  
speaking to this I shall,

I. GIVE you some Account of the Hope here  
intended.

II. CONSIDER how the Scriptures are of Use  
to make us Partakers of it. And add some-  
thing for Application of each.

I. I AM to give some Account of the Hope here  
intended; or, for which the Scriptures were writ-  
ten, that we might have it.

THIS Hope is in general, *A good Hope of  
eternal Life*; or, a pleasing Expectation of  
eternal Life on such Grounds as will not de-  
ceive us. Let us draw out this short Descrip-  
tion of it in the *Three* following Particulars.

I. THE Object of this Hope is eternal Life.

THIS is the only Hope that the Apostle  
speaks of throughout this Epistle. He calls it  
a *Hope of the Glory of God*; that is, of the *Glory*, Rom. 5:2.  
which shall be revealed in us, as he afterwards Chap. 8.  
expresses it. And with respect unto this, he 18.  
speaks in the next Verses of the earnest Expe- Ver. 19,  
ctation of the Creature, which waits for the Mani- 20, 21.  
festation of the Sons of God, in hope, that it shall be  
delivered from the Bondage of Corruption, into the  
glorious Liberty of the Children of God, as it might  
be render'd with Advantage, to clear the Sense  
of the Place. And he adds, that not only they, Ver. 24.  
but our selves also, which have the first Fruits of the  
Spirit, even we our selves groan within our selves,

**SERM. V.** *waiting for the Adoption, to wit, the Redemption of our Body. This unseen, immortal Glory, realiz'd by Faith, was the great Object of their*  
**Rom. 8.** *Hope, as he still farther intimates, saying, If*  
**25.** *we hope for that we see not, then do we with Patience wait for it.*

NOTHING short of this glorious State of Immortality can thoroughly satisfy any rational Man, much less any true Believer. And all his Hopes as a *Christian* look toward this, and center in this. For *if*, says this Apostle,  
**1 Cor. 15.** *in this Life only we have Hope in Christ, we are of*  
**19.** *all Men most miserable. But our Hope stretcheth to Things beyond this uncertain, perishing Life, beyond the gloomy Regions of Death and the Grave, and beyond all the Confines of Time, to the immortal Glory, and perfect undecaying Blessedness on high. It springs forward to an endless Fruition of the All-glorious God, as our chief Good, and All-sufficient Happiness. It reaches after, and lifts up it self to a most amiable State of Light, Love, and Peace, where the Perfection of Beauty shines; a State free from all that is mean and miserable; free from all the Darknes, Mistakes, Uncertainties, and Doubts, we are at present subject to; free from all the Slavery and Torment of tyrannizing Passions, and free from all the Jars and Discords that sling Confusion and Ruin all around this sinful and disorder'd World! A State all over glorious and triumphant, as bright and magnificent, as refin'd and social, and as intirely complete in all sublime surrounding Felicities, as we either can desire, or ever can be capable of! This is the exalted Object of this Hope. Hence the*  
**Tit. 1. 2.** *Apostle speaks of the Hope of eternal Life, and of the Hope of God's Calling, or to which he*  
*calls*

calls us by the Gospel, namely, *The Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the Saints.* And when the Apostle Peter mentions the Believers being begotten again to a lively Hope, he describes the Object of that Hope to be an Inheritance in-  
SERM. V.  
Eph. 1. 18.  
 corruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4, 5,  
 reserved in Heaven for them, who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation.

2. THE Action of the Soul toward this Object is a pleasing Expectation of it.

ALL Hope is an Expectation; but all Expectation is not Hope. There is an Expectation of future Misery, or of the Loss of future Happiness, which is attended with Terror in Proportion to the Strength of the Expectation, and the apprehended Greatness of the expected Evil. And this is all the Expectation that Christless, unrenewed Sinners, can justly have, if they continue to reject Christ, and go on in their Sins. *There remains* Heb. 10. 27, 28.  
*no more, or other Sacrifice for Sins, besides that* which they despise, but a certain fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery Indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries. This Sort of Expectation is indeed the Reverse of Hope.

BUT as the Object of Hope is something, that we apprehend to be good, the Expectation of it can't but be attended with Pleasure and Delight, in proportion to our Thoughts of its Excellence, and to the Firmness with which we expect to enjoy it. Accordingly the Christian's Hope is call'd, *The Rejoicing of Hope*, Chap. 3. 6.  
 and a *rejoicing in Hope of the Glory of God.* 'Tis Rom. 5. 2.  
 a looking for that BLESSED Hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; and a looking for the Mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to eternal Life. And O, who can conceive the Pleasure of such Expectations!



SERM. V.

With what Composure may a Man pass through this World, and with what Satisfaction may he die and leave it, when he has such exalted Views as these before him! There is something so peculiar in the Pleasure of this Hope; something so suitable to the Nature of our Souls; so guiltless and sublime; so sweetly serene at some Times, and so transporting at others, that Words are wanting to say what it is. — Aside all other Pleasures, contemptible the best; and all Sorrows too, not worthy to be named, while these masterly Joys enthrone themselves within us!

3. *THIS pleasing Expectation of eternal Life is form'd upon such Grounds as will not deceive us.*

To be mistaken in our Hopes of eternal Life, and to find them disappointed at last, is the most terrible and irretrievable Ruin that can befall us. What can be more shocking, or fill with greater Dismay, than to meet with a Disappointment in an Affair of such vast and eternal Consequence! Or, what can add a more pungent sting to the Loss of Heaven, and the Terrors of Hell, than that they should befall one, contrary to his own flattering Expectations! Methinks there is something peculiarly moving in Christ's Account of the Horror of those, whose sanguine Hopes shall be defeated, and their Case be past Remedy.

Luke 13.  
28.

*There shall be weeping and gnashing of Teeth, when ye shall see Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and all the Prophets in the Kingdom of God, and you yourselves THRUST out.*

BUT all scriptural Hope, or the Hope that they were written to raise the Believer up unto, is sure and certain; such as never will be disappointed.

pointed. The God, who has promised them <sup>SE. 11. V.</sup> eternal Life, is a God that cannot lie. The Scrip-  
 ture in which he has promised it, is the Scrip-<sup>Tit. 1. 2.</sup>  
 ture of Truth; his Words are Words of Truth,<sup>Dan. 10.</sup>  
 they are the true Sayings of God, they are not<sup>21.</sup>  
 cunningly devised Fables, but the sure Word of<sup>Ecclef. 12.</sup>  
 Prophecy, proved to be of Divine Authority by<sup>10.</sup>  
 all the Ways that can reasonably be desired,<sup>Rev. 19. 9.</sup>  
 or that the Nature of the Thing requires,<sup>2 Pet. 1.</sup>  
 without a Continuation of Miracles, which at  
 first confirm'd them, and are therefore need-  
 less now. And this Scripture has said, with  
 repeated Assurances, that whoever believeth on<sup>Rom. 9.</sup>  
 Christ shall not be ashamed or confounded. Hence<sup>33. & 10.</sup>  
 the Apostle calls the Hope of true Believers<sup>11.</sup>  
 good Hope through Grace, and a Hope that maketh<sup>1 Pet. 2. 6.</sup>  
 not ashamed. Accordingly we have frequent<sup>2 Thes. 2.</sup>  
 Exhortations and Encouragements in Scrip-<sup>16.</sup>  
 ture to such, not to cast away their Confidence,<sup>Rom. 5. 5.</sup>  
 which has great Recompence of Reward; and not<sup>Heb. 10.</sup>  
 to be moved away from the Hope of the Gospel. But<sup>35.</sup>  
 to shew all Diligence to the full Assurance of<sup>Col. 1. 23.</sup>  
 Hope to the End; to hold fast the Confidence, and<sup>Heb. 6. 11.</sup>  
 the Rejoicing of the Hope firm to the End; and to<sup>Chap. 3. 6.</sup>  
 be sober, and hope to the End.<sup>1 Pet. 1.</sup>

THESE, and several other Passages to this  
 Purpose, are as plain Assurances from the  
 inspired Writers, as Words can express, that  
 the Hope which the Scriptures are written to  
 promote in us, stands upon such Principles as  
 never can deceive us. If our Hope is but  
 scriptural, we have the utmost Securities that  
 it is warrantable; and shall have the happiest Is-  
 sues. For the Hope of the Righteous shall be Glad-<sup>Prov. 10.</sup>  
 ness; but the Expectation of the Wicked shall perish.<sup>28.</sup>

The grand concerning Point with us is, that  
 we be indeed Partakers of this Hope. And  
 this leads us to the next Part of my Design,  
 which is to consider,

HEB. V.  


## II. How the Scriptures are of Use to make us Partakers of this Hope.

OUR Text says they were written that we might have Hope. The Apostle doth not hereby insinuate, as if our barely having the Scriptures were sufficient to give us this Hope; nor, as if we had sufficient Skill or Power in our selves to make such Use of them, as should render them effectual to raise a well-grounded Hope of eternal Life within us. For the great Design of the Scripture is to lead us off from all Self-sufficiency, to shew us our Weakness and Corruption, as well as our Guilt and Danger, and to fix all our Dependencies on God in Christ for the Supplies of his Spirit to make his Word effectual to us. And our Apostle particularly speaks of God in this Context, as the God of Hope, and desires for these Romans, that it might prevail abundantly in them by the Power of his Spirit. Now the God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in believing, that ye may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost.

HE is the Author, as well as the Object of this Hope. 'Tis by the Power of his Spirit that we abound in it. He works it in us here, as well as crowns it with the Enjoyment of himself hereafter. He begets us to a lively Hope, according to his abundant Mercy. He gives us everlasting Consolation, and good Hope through Grace. And we through the Spirit, or through the Influence of the Holy Ghost upon our Hearts, wait for the Hope of Righteousness by Faith. The Hope of Righteousness respects that Blessedness and Glory, that belongs to such as are made Righteous by the Righteousness of Faith; And we wait with Hope for this Glo-



ry, *through the Spirit*, as he by his enlightning, **SERM. V.**  
 quickening, comforting, sanctifying, and con-  
 firming Work, *witneseth with our Spirits that* **Rom. 8.**  
*we are the Children of God. And if Children, then* **16, 17.**  
*Heirs, Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ.* **Eph. 1. 13.**  
 Accordingly he is said to be *the Earnest of our*  
*Inheritance, until the Redemption of the purchased*  
*Possession.* And Believers are said to be *seal-* **Chap. 4.**  
*ed by him unto the Day of Redemption,* that they **30.**  
 may live in the joyful and assured Expectation  
 of it.

BUT, as the Holy Spirit works us up unto  
 this Hope in such a Manner, and by such Means,  
 as are suitable to our rational Nature : As he  
*draws with Cords of a Man, with Bands of Love :* **Hol. 11. 4.**  
 So the Scriptures shew us that Manner, and  
 furnish us with those Means, which he hath  
 appointed, and by which he works, to raise  
 this Hope of eternal Life. He realizes them  
 to us in their Divine Authority, Truth,  
 Goodness, Suitableness, and Importance, to  
 give them a prevailing Influence upon us. He  
 sets them with the strongest Light, and most  
 perswasive Evidence, before our Minds ; and  
 impresses them with the most agreeable and  
 powerful Efficacy on our Hearts, on our Wills,  
 Affections, and Consciences, that they may  
 have proper Effects upon us ; and he thereby  
 works this Hope in us.

THE Scriptures therefore are to be con-  
 sidered in the Place of *Means*, or as containing  
 the *only proper Means*, which God has appointed  
 and promised to own, which we are to attend  
 to and embrace, and which we should labour  
 to improve, with a Dependance on him  
 through Christ, for the effectual Assistances of  
 his Spirit, as we would be secure of a Hope  
 that shall not be disappointed. To pretend to  
 this



*serm. V.* this Hope without the Use of Means, is *Enthusiastick*, and to seek it by *other Means*, not founded on Scripture, or not warranted by it, is *Superstitious*. All Imaginations of our own, and all Institutions and Doctrines of Men, which are not according to the Scripture, are both useless and injurious to our Hope of eternal Life; for as far as our Hope is built on them, it stands in the Wisdom of Men, and not in the Power of God. But the Scriptures are every Way sufficient, in the Nature of Means, for it. They have an admirable Tendency to promote it, and are graciously owned of God, both in reading them, and hearing them preach'd, according to his Appointment, to answer this valuable End. And *how they are of Use*, under this Consideration of them, to make us Partakers of the Hope of eternal Life, may be set out in three Things, which are countenanced by our Text.

(1.) THEY are of Use for this Purpose, by revealing the Object to us, and the Way of obtaining it. They were written for our Learning, that, by the Representation they give of the Doctrine of eternal Life, we might have Hope.

WE could never have been fully assured of the Certainty of a future State of Blessedness; nor could we have come to any clear Sentiments about the Nature of it; much less could we have known how, or in what Way, it could possibly be obtain'd by any of the degenerate Race of Men, had not the Gospel made a Revelation of it. But Christ hath abolish'd Death, and brought Life and Immortality to Light by the Gospel. We are thereby assur'd, that in his Father's House are many Mansions; and that there remains a Rest to the People of God. This is sometimes call'd a Treasure in the Heavens that faileth not;

2 Tim. 1.  
10.

John 14.2.

Heb. 4.9.

Luke 12.

33.

not; an *Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled*; SERM. V.  
and the *Inheritance of the Saints in Light*. At 1 Pet. 1. 4.  
other Times, a *Crown of Life*, and a *Crown of* Col. 1. 12.  
*Glory that fadeth not away*. And at other's, Jam. 1. 12.  
*eternal Salvation*, and *everlasting Life*. 1 Pet. 5. 4.

AND to take off our Thoughts from every Heb. 5. 9.  
Thing that is carnal and sensual in the Enter- John 3.  
tainments of Heaven, the Scriptures acquaint 16.  
us with the *sublime* and *spiritual* Nature of  
that State, as consisting of such real Excellen-  
ces and noble Pleasures, as exalt Human Na-  
ture, and raise its Dignity equal to its De-  
lights. It is represented as consisting in the  
full *Enjoyment* of the infinitely Great and All-  
sufficient God, or in the most intimate Pre-  
sence and Communion with him, As, when  
'tis call'd *his receiving us to Glory*, and our being Psal. 73.  
*present with him*, and *ever with the Lord*. At 24.  
other Times 'tis represented as an open *Visi-* 2 Cor. 5. 8.  
*on* of God and Christ in their Glory: As when 1 Thes. 4.  
'tis said, *Blessed are the Pure in Heart, for they shall* 17.  
*see God*; and *they shall behold his Face in Righte-* Mat. 5. 8.  
*ousness*; and, *Father, I will, that they whom thou* Psal. 17.  
*hast given me, be with me where I am, that they* 15.  
*may behold my Glory*; and *they shall see him as he* John 17.  
*is*. It is likewise represented as consisting in 24.  
the most intire *Likeness* to Christ that we can 1 John 3.  
possibly be exalted to, free from all Sin, and  
perfect in all Holiness in our Souls, and re-  
sembling his glorify'd Body in our Bodies: As,  
when 'tis said that at his appearing we shall be like Psal. 17.  
him; that we shall be satisfy'd when we awake in 15.  
his *Likeness*; that he'll change our vile Body, that Phil. 3. 21.  
it may be fashioned like to his glorious Body; and,  
when that Christ, who is our Life shall appear, Col. 3. 4.  
then shall we also appear with him in Glory. And  
the complete *Satisfaction*, that attends all this, Ila. 57. 2.  
is represented as an *entering into Peace*, and into Mat. 25.  
the 21.

*Isa. V. the Joy of our Lord, as a Fulness of Joy in his Presence, and as Pleasures at his Right Hand for ever-*  
*Psal. 16. more.*

11.

THE Scriptures likewise reveal to us God's Method of Salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. They set him out as the eternal Word, who was God, and was made Flesh and dwelt amongst us: Or who was the Son of God,

John 1, 14.

Gal. 4. 4, 5. sent forth in the Fulness of Time, made of a Woman, made under the Law, to redeem them that were under the Law, that we might receive the Adoption of Sons. They assure us of his Obedience, Sufferings, and Death, in our Nature, and in our room and stead, the Just for the Unjust, to satisfy God's Justice, appease his Wrath, bring in an everlasting Righteousness, and obtain eternal Redemption for us. And his Father's well-pleasedness in him, his full Approbation of what he has done and suffered, and his Acceptance of his Death, as an atoning Sacrifice for Sin, are manifestly declared in the Gospel, and are demonstrated by his Resurrection from the Dead, and Exaltation to a State of Glory, which are likewise recorded in it. And the Apostle Peter mentions his Resurrection and Exaltation in pursuance of his redeeming Death, as the Ground

1 Pet. 1.

18, 19, 20, 21. of our Faith and Hope through him. For as much as ye know, that ye were not redeemed with corruptible Things, as Silver and Gold — But with the precious Blood of Christ, as of a Lamb without blemish and without spot. Who verily was fore-ordain'd before the Foundation of the World; but was manifest in these last Times for you; who by him do believe in God, that raised him from the Dead, and gave him Glory, that your Faith and Hope might be in God.

HENCE



HENCE a Way of Life, and complete Sal- SERM. V.  
 vation for all Sorts of Sinners, under all the  
 Wants and Miseries that attend their fallen  
 State, is laid open, and set before them through  
 Christ in the Gospel; for *this is a faithful Say- 1 Tim. 1.*  
 ing, and worthy of all Acceptation, that Christ Je- 15.  
 sus came into the World to save Sinners; and he is Heb. 7. 25.  
 able to save to the uttermost all that come to God  
 by him; seeing he ever lives to make Intercession for  
 them. Hence the Riches of Divine Grace are  
 display'd, a Saviour is preach'd, and Remissi-  
 on of Sins proposed to them through Faith in  
 his Atonement, for we are justify'd freely by Rom. 3.  
 God's Grace, through the Redemption that is in Je- 24, 25, 26.  
 sus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a Propi-  
 tiation, through Faith in his Blood, to declare his  
 Righteousness for the Remission of Sins that are  
 past, through the Forbearance of God, to declare at  
 this Time his Righteousness, that he might be just,  
 and the Justifier of him that believes in Jesus.  
 Hence they are assured, that Wisdom, Righte- 1 Cor. 1.  
 ousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, are pro- 30.  
 vided in Christ, and that all these shall be  
 graciously conveyed for complete Salvation to  
 such as believe; for whoever believes in him shall John 3.  
 not perish, but have everlasting Life. And we 15.  
 are saved by Grace through Faith, and that not of Eph. 2. 8.  
 our selves, it is the Gift of God. And hence  
 they are indispensably obliged to die to Sin, Rom. 6.  
 and walk in newness of Life, as ever they hope 2, 4.  
 to obtain eternal Glory through a crucified  
 and risen Saviour. For he bore our Sins in his 1 Pet. 2.  
 own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin 24.  
 should live unto Righteousness. And our old Man Rom. 6.  
 is crucified with him, that the Body of Sin might be 22, 23.  
 destroy'd, that henceforth we should not serve Sin;  
 and being made free from Sin, and become Ser-  
 vants to God, we have our Fruit unto Holiness,  
 and



**SERM. V.** *and the End everlasting Life — which is the Gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord.*

ACCORDINGLY, that we might not deceive our selves with only a speculative, dead Faith, the Scripture describes that which is true and effectual to Salvation, to be the Faith of the Operation of God, and a believing with the Heart to Righteousness, and with such a Faith as has a prevalence to purify the Heart, work by Love, and overcome this World; that we may be fitted for the Service of God here, and train'd up for a full Enjoyment of him hereafter. Hence Sinners are said to be turn'd from Darkness to Light, and from the Power of Satan to God, that they may receive Forgiveness of Sins, and Inheritance among them that are sanctify'd, by Faith that is in Jesus Christ.

Now this Representation of eternal Life, and of the Way of obtaining it through Jesus Christ, opens a Door of Hope to lost Sinners, who otherwise must have been for ever without Hope, as the Apostle says the Gentiles were, till Christ came and preached Peace to them. It pathetically excites and encourages them to return to God through Christ, at the same Time that it calls upon them so to do, and shews them how they should do it. It acquaints them with God as accessible through the great Mediator, who is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and through whom both Jews and Gentiles have an Access by one Spirit to the Father. It carries strong Intimations, that however obnoxious the State of Sinners by Nature is; and that however desperate, past Hope, and past Remedy, in their own Apprehensions, 'tis become by their Practice, as Children of Disobedience; yet that, in this Method of God's own Appointment, they may obtain Pardon, Peace, and

and Favour with him, together with all recovering and sanctifying Grace, to fit them for Duty and Service here, and for an eternal Inheritance hereafter; according to the Order in which all these are set out in the Gospel. It invites them to put in for Mercy while there is room, to seek the Lord while he may be found, and Isa. 55. 6. to call upon him while he is near; to come to Christ, that they may have Life; and to seek after all the Salvation they need in him. It gives them comfortable Grounds of Hope for gracious and effectual Assistances herein, for God has promised his Holy Spirit to them that ask him; Luke 11. and Christ is exalted with his right Hand to be a Prince and Saviour, to give Repentance and Remission of Sins. And it assures them they need not fear that their earnest and fiducial Applications to him shall be rejected; for he says, Come to me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, Mat. 11. and I will give you Rest. And, all that the Father giveth me shall come to me, and him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out. Hence,

(2.) THE Scriptures are of use to make us Partakers of the Hope of eternal Life, by the suitable Effects they have upon us. This is suggested in our Text by the Apostle's mentioning two Effects of the Scripture, Patience and Comfort, that we through them might have Hope.

IF our Heads are ever so full of Scripture Notions, they will not profit us to eternal Life, unless they have a suitable Influence upon our Hearts and Lives. The Apostle speaks of some, to whom the Gospel was preach'd, but Heb. 4. 2. it did not profit them, not being mix'd with Faith in them that heard it. And he speaks of others, That received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved. And our blessed Lord himself tells us, That Servant which knew his Lord's Will, 47.

# 128      *How the Scriptures are useful*

**SERM. V.** *Will, and prepared not, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes.*

**BUT** the Scriptures are the Means, by which the Spirit of God works upon our Minds and Hearts, in a diligent Use of them, to make a thorough Change upon us. *Turn you,* Prov. 1. 23. *says God, at my Reproof: Behold I will pour out my Spirit unto you; I will make known my Words unto you.* He has graciously promised in his Covenant, that his Spirit shall accompany his Word. Isa. 59. 21. *As for me, this is my Covenant with them, saith the Lord, My Spirit that is upon thee, and my Words which I have put in thy Mouth, shall not depart out of thy Mouth, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed, nor out of the Mouth of thy Seed's Seed, saith the Lord, from henceforth and for ever.* Accordingly the Gospel Dispensation, to which this Promise refers, is call'd the *Ministration of the Spirit*. And as God has promised to take Ezek. 36. 26. *away the stony Heart, and give his People Hearts of Flesh; to put his Law in their inward Parts,* Jer. 31. 33. *and write it in their Hearts:* So the Apostle, expressing the Efficacy of the Gospel on the Corinthians, 2 Cor. 3. 3. *says, they were manifestly declared to be the Epistle of Christ, minister'd by the Apostles, written not with Ink, but with the Spirit of the Living God; not in Tables of Stone, but in fleshy Tables of the Heart.* God transcrib'd his Word upon their Hearts by the Power of his Spirit, that accompanied the Apostles Ministration of it. He impress'd it with such Power, as left the Impression upon them in a real and visible Change of Heart and Life. He thereby form'd *Christ within them*, both with respect to their Faith in him, and Conformity 1 Cor. 3. 3. *unto him.* For, says this Apostle to these Corinthians, 3. 6, 7. *Who is Paul, or who is Apollo, but Ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave*



gave to every Man? I have planted; Apollo wa- SERM. V.  
tered: but God gave the Increase. So then, nei-  
ther is he that planteth any Thing, neither he that  
watereth, but God that giveth the Increase. We  
laboured in the Word and Doctrine, but God  
gave the Success. Hence Faith comes by Hear- Rom. 10.  
ing, and Hearing by the Word of God. And it 17.  
pleased God, by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save 1 Cor. 1.  
them that believe. 21.

THE whole Work of Regeneration and San-  
ctification, whereby we are born for Heaven,  
and prepared, and fitted for the Enjoyment of  
it, is likewise ascribed to the Word of God, as  
the Means by which he effects it in us. Being 1 Pet. 1. 23.  
born again; not of corruptible Seed, but of incorrup-  
tible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth  
for ever. And of his own Will begat he us with Jam. 1. 18.  
the Word of Truth. By this Word he alters  
the Bent and Bias of the Soul, changeth its  
Principles and governing Aims, fixes its Re-  
solutions toward himself; and spreads a pow-  
erful Influence through all the Members of  
the Body, that they may be Instruments of Righ-  
teousness to God. Hence the Apostle speaking  
of this effectual Change, says, Ye have obeyed Rom. 6.  
from the Heart that Form of Doctrine, which was de- 17.  
livered you, or unto which ye were delivered;  
[Εἰς τὴν παραδόχην] that is, that it might rule  
and govern you, as Sin had done before.

Now, when the Gospel has these, and  
such like Effects upon us, by the concurring  
Agency of the Holy Spirit, it thereby raises  
our Hopes of eternal Life.

THE Faith it works in us is the first Prin-  
ciple of that Hope. For 'tis by Faith that we  
receive the Gospel-Discovery of eternal Life  
through Jesus Christ, upon the Credit of a  
Divine Testimony: We hereby realize it to



- SERM. V. *our selves; we hereby are perswaded of it, approve of it, and embrace it, as a Matter of the greatest Certainty, Excellence, and Importance: And we hereby trust in Christ, and deal with God in humble Confidence through him for eternal Life, according to the Gospel-Discovery of it. And this is a Spring of Hope that we shall enjoy it. Being justified by Faith,*
- Rom. 5. 1, 2. *we have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ——— and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of*
- Chap. 15. 13. *God. Hence, The God of Hope fills us with all Joy and Peace in believing, that we may abound in Hope, through the Power of the Holy Ghost. And to shew the Influence our Faith has upon our Hope, the Apostle, in another Place, mentions a Continuance in the Faith, and being grounded and settled in it, as proper Preservatives from being moved away from the Hope of the Gospel. And his Account of his own Experience shews, that his own Faith supported and embolden'd his Hope. For I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed to him against that Day.*
- 2 Tim. 1. 12.

THE effectual Change, that is made by the Scriptures upon the Principles and Temper of our Hearts, and on the Course of our Conversation, is a further Assistant to this Hope. This carries an Evidence to us, that God has wrought, or form'd us, for an Inheritance among them that are sanctify'd, or for a State of spotless Immortality, where all our holy Propensions shall be fully satisfy'd, and all our Graces shall be perfected. And this gives us a comfortable Hope and Expectation of it.

Acts 26. 18. *Thus the Apostle argues upon it; He that hath wrought us for the self same Thing (viz. an Immortal Life) is God, who also has given unto*

us the Earnest of the Spirit. Therefore we are always confident, knowing, that whilst we are at home in the Body, we are absent from the Lord. This holy Confidence of Mortality's being swallow'd up of Life, as the preceeding Verse expresses it, or of being present with the Lord upon their Absence from the Body, as a following Verse has it, rose up within them from what God had done in forming them for that State, and giving them his Spirit, as the Earnest of it. And it may be truly said in this Case, that if our Hearts condemn us not, then have we Confidence toward God. SERM. V.

WHEN a Man's Conscience bears him witness of his Integrity before God; of his Faith, Love, Repentance, and Devotedness to him; of his Abhorrence of all Iniquity, and Delight in God's Ways; and of his Affections being set on Things above, beyond the Things here below; when he tastes the Pleasures of the Divine Life, walks up and down under the Dominion of the Grace of God, and finds his Temper form'd in a prevailing Degree, for the pure Enjoyments, Business, and Society of the heavenly State; he then feels himself to be a Man for Heaven, and cannot but hope he shall go thither. And then shall he not be ashamed of his Hope, when he has respect to all God's Commandments. Psalm. 119.

WE can have no solid Hopes of future Blessedness, without a real Conversion to God through Christ, by the Gospel. For, know ye not that the Unrighteous shall not inherit the Kingdom of God? Be not deceived; neither Fornicators, nor Idolaters, nor Adulterers, nor Effeminate, nor Abusers of themselves with Mankind, nor Thieves, nor Covetous, nor Drunkards, nor Revilers, nor Extortioners, shall inherit the Kingdom 1 Cor. 7: 9, 10.

- SERM. V.** of God. But when we find the Gospel has had such Effects upon us, that, as the Apostle
- 1 Cor. 7.** speaks of the *Corinthians*, we are *washed, sanctified, and justified, in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God*, it is a comfortable Evidence to us, that God's Method of Salvation has effectually taken Place in us, and is a sufficient Warrant for our Hopes, that God
- 2 Thess. 2. 13, 14.** *has from the Beginning chosen us to Salvation, through Sanctification of the Spirit, and Belief of the Truth, whereunto he call'd us by the Gospel, to the obtaining of the Glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*
- Hence when the *Thessalonians*, by means of the
- 1 Epist. 1. 9, 10.** *Apostle's Preaching; turned to God from Idols, to serve the living and true God, then they waited, with Expectation and Hope, for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the Dead, even Jesus, who delivered us from the Wrath to come.*

AND the more we act up to our Christian Character, and live as becomes the Heirs of Salvation, the more assured and settled our Hopes of that Salvation will ordinarily be. Hence, when the Apostle had said to the believing *Hebrews*, *God is not unrighteous, to forget your Work and Labour of Love, which ye have shewed towards his Name, in that ye have minister'd to the Saints, and do minister*; he immediately adds, *And we desire that every one of you do shew the same Diligence, to the full Assurance of Hope to the End: That ye be not slothful, but Followers of them, who through Faith and Patience inherit the Promises.* And he found the Advantage of this himself, for when he had the nearest Prospects of a violent Death, his calm Reflections on his own Faith and Faithfulness, reviv'd his joyful Confidence of a glorious

**2 Tim. 4. 6, 7, 8.** *Crown. I am now ready to be offer'd, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand. I have fought*

a good Fight, I have finish'd my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. Hence,

3. THE Scriptures are of Use to make us Partakers of this Hope, by the Assurance they give of eternal Life to all those, on whom they have these happy Effects. The main Comfort of the Scriptures, by which we have Hope, lies in the Promise that 2 Joh. 2. God hath promised us, even eternal Life. 25.

THE Promises, when they belong to us, are a sure Ground of Hope for the Blessings promised; and eternal Life is ensur'd by the Promises to every one that believes. For God Joh. 3.16. so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life. And, This, says Joh. 6.40. Christ, is the Will of him that sent me, that every one which seeth the Son and believeth on him, may have everlasting Life: And I will raise him up at the last Day. Accordingly he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and admired in all them that 2 Thes. 1. 10. believe — in that Day. Hence believing in Christ is call'd believing on him to Life everlasting. 1 Tim. 1. And as true and effectual Faith works by Love, 16. and purifies the Heart; so the Promises of eternal Life are made to those that love God, and whose Hearts are pure. Blessed is the Man Jam. 1.12. that endureth Temptation; for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which God hath promised to them that love him. And, Hearken Chap. 2. 5. my beloved Brethren, hath not God chosen the Poor of this World rich in Faith, and Heirs of the Kingdom, which he hath promised to them that love him? And our Lord has pronounced Blessedness on the Pure in Heart; for they shall see Mat. 5. 8.



**SERM. V.** *God.* Agreeable to this, it may be truly said with a Reference to the heavenly State, *Who shall ascend into the Hill of the Lord? Who shall stand in his Holy Place? He that hath clean Hands and a pure Heart, &c.*

**TIT. I. 1,** *the Faith of God's Elect, and the acknowledging of the Truth, which is after Godliness, in Hope of eternal Life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the World began: But has in due Times manifested his Word (of Promise) through Preaching.* All God's Promises are confirm'd in **Heb. 9. 15.** *Christ, who is the Mediator of the New Testament, that ——— they which are call'd, might receive the Promise of the eternal Inheritance.*

**Chap. 6.** *AND if we are not satisfied with his Word of Promise, he has condescended to the Weakness of our Faith, that all Jealousies, or Debates in our Minds, might be silenced, about the Certainty of it, in giving his Oath still farther to confirm it. Wherein God, willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of Promise the Immutability of his Counsel, confirm'd it by an Oath; that by two immutable Things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong Consolation, who have fled for Refuge, to lay hold on the Hope set before us. And hereupon it is added, Which Hope we have, as an Anchor of the Soul, both sure and stedfast. The Promises of eternal Life to those, on whom the Gospel has had its proper Effects, are hereby ratified with all the Evidence that can be requisite, to assure us they shall never be defeated or repeal'd. These make up a great part of the Scrip-*

**17, 18.**

**Ver. 19.**

Scripture Record, that God has given to us eternal Life, that this Life is in his Son, and that he that hath the Son hath Life. And these Things, says the Apostle John, have I written to you that believe on the Name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal Life.

SERM. V.  
1 John 5.  
11, 12, 13.

THAT true Believers may have the Hope in themselves, that there is a most solid Ground for, in the Promises of eternal Life, which belong to them, and which are design'd to promote that Hope in them; the holy Spirit directs, enlightens, and assists them in the Application of such Promises to themselves. They are his Language, in the Scripture, to them, and he shews them by his Work in their Hearts, that they are the Persons intended by them. The Light he casts into their Minds to give Evidence of the Truth of his Work in them, and of their State of Favour with God; and the Energy with which, in some most needful and proper Season, he sets home the Word of Promise, as belonging to themselves, gives them strong and delightful Hopes of an eternal Enjoyment of God according to his Promise. He in this manner witnesseth with our Spirits, that we are the Children of God; and if Children, then Heirs of God, and joint Heirs with Christ. And all the Hope we have as Heirs, is according to the Promise. Hence the blessed Spirit is call'd the Holy Spirit of Promise, with respect to his sealing Believers. The Spirit of Promise is most usually understood to mean the promised Spirit: But why may it not signify the Spirit, that useth and applies the Promise in his sealing Work; which is an evidencing as well as insuring Earnest of our Inheritance, and supposes a Use of the Promises, in his enlightning the Eyes

Rom. 8.  
16, 17.  
Gal. 3. 29.  
Eph. 1. 13.

Ver. 14.

Ver. 18.

**SPERM. V.** of our Understanding, that we may know what is the Hope of his Calling?

ALL our Hope of eternal Life, as well as Israel's Hope of the *Messiah*, may be call'd the **Acts 26, 6.** *Hope of the Promise*; for without God's Promise we could have no warrantable Hope of it. But God has given us exceeding great and precious Promises, and causes us to hope in them, **Psal. 119.** Hence said *David*, *Remember the Word to thy* 49. *Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope.* And the gracious Influence of the Spirit, upon our Hope of promised Glory, is spoken of as that which gives us an unshaken Confidence **Rom. 5. 5.** in it. For this *Hope maketh not ashamed, because the Love of God is shed abroad in our Hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given to us.* Thus we have consider'd, How the Scriptures are of use to raise our Hope of eternal Life. 'Tis now Time to make a few Reflections upon it with a particular Regard to our selves.

### R E F L E C T I O N S.

**Use I.** Use I. WE may observe, That a good Hope of eternal Life is of the greatest Importance to us.

GOD's End in making a Revelation of himself in the Scripture, must needs be of the highest Moment and Consequence to us. All our Notions of his Wisdom and Goodness, assure us of this; and our Text speaks of the Hope of eternal Life as a principal Design of this Revelation. And who that considers himself as having an immortal Soul, that must be either unutterably Happy, or insupportably Miserable for ever, can think it a small or trivial Matter, whether he has this Hope or no? A Danger of being shut out from the bright Regions of eternal Bliss is very sad; but a

Cer-

*Certainty* of being banish'd from them into eternal Darkness, must be the worst Condition that can befall us on this side Hell. SERM. V.

ETERNAL *Life* is an Expression full of ravishing Joys, it awakens Ideas of all complicated Blessedness, and demands the strongest Desires of an immortal Soul. And 'tis impossible for a rational Creature, made for Eternity, to be truly Happy without some Hopes of it. Whatever he may enjoy in this World, the Thought that all these Things will quickly have an End, and that everlasting Torments and Agonies will succeed them, must imbitter them all to an awaken'd and considering Mind. But scriptural Hopes of immortal Glory must sweeten every Circumstance of this perishing Life. They give us a Taste of more refined and exalted Pleasures, than this World can furnish; and they take out the Sting of every Trouble that surrounds us. These are *Joys unspeakable and full of Glory*; they put the Soul in present Possession of that *Peace that passeth all Understanding*, and are a Dawn, an Earnest, and a Foretaste of that Fulness of Joy that is in God's Presence for evermore. They fill our Lives with Comfort, and make us dare to die. They support and encourage us in our holy Profession, Trials, Sufferings, and Services, in this World; and entertain us with delightful Evidence that we are safe for the next, and that we shall be as Happy to all Eternity there, as we our selves can desire to be. Hence,

Use 2. LET us examine how far this Design of Use 2.  
the Scripture is answered upon us.

A MISTAKE and a Disappointment in our Hopes of eternal Life, is as dreadful, as good Hopes, and Success in them, can be comfortable.



SERM. V.

able. If we miscarry in these, we are irrecoverably lost and ruin'd for ever, and nothing can make us Happy; but if we are right in our Hopes, all is safe and well, and nothing can make us miserable. It therefore highly concerns us to examine impartially, as in the Sight and Presence of that God, before whose Judgment Seat, our present Judgment concerning our Hopes, must quickly be tried; whether we have good Hope of eternal Life according to the Scripture, or no.

I SUPPOSE you generally pretend to have some Hopes of it. But if you were seriously to ask your own Consciences, whether they are such as the Scripture will support, or such as you dare abide by, and venture your Eternity upon; the Question is, what Answer you could make? Is your Hope of eternal Life grounded on Gospel Discoveries of it, and of the only Way of obtaining it through Jesus Christ? And, has this Gospel had its proper Effects upon you? Have you experienc'd the Influence of the Holy Spirit with his Word to work Faith in your Heart, to turn you from your Iniquities to God through Christ, to form you for Heaven, to apply the Promises, and to enable you to see your Ground, and so to look for eternal Life through the Lord Jesus according to the Promises? This is the Hope of the Righteous that shall not be cut off. But the Hope that has no better Ground, than *Notions* of the Scripture Doctrine of eternal Life, without Heart-dealings with God about them, without Heart-changing Impressions by them, and without a Behaviour correspondent to them, is mere Presumption; and how clear, exact, or extensive soever, those *Notions* may be, the Hopes that

that are built upon them will cover you with Confusion at last. Hence, SERM. V.

*Use 3. LET us use the Scriptures with this View, that we may have good Hope through Grace of eternal Life by them.* Use 3.

As they were written that we might have Hope, it is our Duty, as well as great Advantage, to seek that End by them. We should read, hear, and study the Scriptures, and reflect upon, and pray over them, with this Desire and Concern, that we may arrive to a clear and well-grounded Hope of our own inheriting eternal Life. This is inexpressibly better, than to make use of them to stock our Heads with fine Speculations, or to gratify Curiosity, or to puzzle our selves or others with some Difficulties and Obscurities that may be found in them, and then to dispute artfully about them. A good Hope of eternal Life, by means of the Scriptures, answers their great Design incomparably better, and is ten Thousand Times more profitable for us than all this.

LET the Sinner therefore, that has no Hope in himself, and has no reason to hope on any Principle whatsoever, that he shall go to Heaven, in case he lives and dies in his present State before God; let him search the Scriptures, as containing the Doctrine of eternal Life through Jesus Christ, that he may learn the Way in which there may be Hope for him; and let him pursue the Search until, by the Grace of God, he may be Partaker of that Hope which shall never make him ashamed. Let the disconsolate Soul, that has cast off Hope, look into the great Encouragements of the Gospel to receive it. Such as the Fulness of Christ, the Riches of Grace, and the Suitableness of the Promises, that

140 *How the Scriptures are useful, &c.*

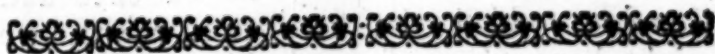
**SERM. V.** that are plentifully display'd therein. Let such as have some good Hope, converse frequently with the Scriptures, and particularly with those Parts of them that are most adapted to increase and establish their Hope. And let such as have greater Degrees of it continue to use the Scripture for its Nourishment and Improvement unto a full Assurance; that their Faith and Hope may still grow exceedingly in the Light of God's Word and Spirit here, till in his most illustrious Light above they shall see Light for ever.



S E R.



## SERMON VI.



ROM. xv. 4.

— *That we through Patience  
and Comfort of the Scriptures  
might have Hope.*



WE are considering the Purposes for which the Scriptures are of standing Use to the Christian Church. The principal End mentioned in our Text is *Hope*, meaning the Hope of eternal Life. This was the Subject of our last Discourse. We are now to consider,

2dly. THE two subservient Ends, which are *Patience* and *Comfort*, to assist our Hope.

THE Word *Scriptures*, in this Passage, seems to refer both to *Patience* and *Comfort*. They are of Use to promote both. And accordingly  
our

SERM. VI.  
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SERM. VI.

our Text, as I apprehend, speaks of the *Patience of the Scriptures*, as well as of the *Comfort of them*. For 'tis brought in to shew, that what the Scripture says of Christ's bearing Reproaches, is of use to teach us Patience and Self-denial; that we, encouraged by his Example, may learn to *bear the Infirmities of the weak, and not to please our selves*; for *whatever Things were written aforetime*, and consequently this, that was written concerning Christ's bearing Reproaches, *was written for our Learning*, that both by the Patience and Comfort, which the Scriptures afford, we

Heb. 12. 2. might have Hope through him; *who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the right Hand of the Throne of God.*

THE Hope of eternal Life is a Spring of Patience and Comfort under all present Difficulties: And Patience and Comfort invigorate our Hope. They have a mutual Influence to assist and promote each other. But our Text speaks only of the Influence that our Patience and Comfort have upon our Hope, and represents the Scriptures as written to promote *those*, with a subservience unto *this*.

PATIENCE and Comfort suppose that we live in an *imperfect* State, made up of Mixtures of Good and Evil; that we have something to *bear*, and something to *enjoy*. And Hope supposes that there is a *better* State of unmix'd Blessedness to come, where we shall have no *Disagreeables* to bear, but all *Agreeables* to enjoy. In this present, imperfect State, *Patience* assists our Comfort, as it is a Composure of the Mind, and a regular Temper of Spirit under all the Afflictions that befall us; a Temper that gives a self-conscious Pleasure, and puts

## Patience and Comfort.

143

us into a fit Posture to receive all the Comforts SERM. VI.  
 that offer to us. *Comfort* assists our *Patience*,  
 as it cheers and fortifies the Soul, and over-  
 balances every Weight that would oppress it:  
*The Joy of the Lord is our Strength; and a merry* Neh. 8. 10.  
*Heart doth good as a Medicine.* And *Patience* and Prov. 17.  
*Comfort* assist our *Hope*, as they are an Expe-<sup>22.</sup>  
 rience of the Favour of God to us, of the  
 Truth and Power of his Grace in us, and of  
 the Method of his Grace in working us up  
 to a better State. For we are therein Follow- Heb. 6. 12.  
 ers of them, who through Faith and Patience inhe-  
 rit the Promises. Hence the Apostle speaks of  
 glorifying in Tribulations, knowing that Tribulation Rom. 5. 3,  
 worketh Patience; and Patience Experience; and 4-  
 Experience Hope.

It must be a shocking Thing to our Hopes  
 of Heaven, to find our Spirits unsubdued, our  
 Passions fierce, raging and ungovernable, un-  
 yielding to the Hand of God, and full of bit-  
 ter, impatient Resentments against Men. For  
*Woe unto him that striveth with his Maker.* The Isa. 45. 9.  
 Language of such a Temper is like Pharaoh's,  
*Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* Or like Exod. 5. 2.  
 another wicked King, *Behold this Evil is of the 2 Kings*  
*Lord, what should I wait for the Lord any longer?* 6. 33.  
 And the Apostle James says, *The Wrath of Jam. 1. 20.*  
*Man worketh not the Righteousness of God.* And  
 if any Man among you seem to be religious, and Ver. 26.  
 bridleth not his Tongue, but deceiveth his own  
 Heart, this Man's Religion is vain. Such a  
 Temper is unfit for a serene Heaven, is un-  
 like to that which reigns in Heaven, and can  
 have no Satisfaction there. And while this  
 uncreaturely, and unsocial Disposition governs  
 and commands us, we can have no steady, pre-  
 vailing Hopes of a State of unreserv'd Sub-  
 jection to God, and of an unvaried Love,  
 Har-

SERM. VI.

Harmony, and Peace with him, and with all our Companions for ever. And if we have none of the *Comforts* of God in our Souls, but walk in *Darkness*, under the Power of Unbelief, and of a dejected Spirit, refusing to be comforted by all that the Word of God proposes for our Relief; this will in course sink our Hopes of eternal Life. But when by means of his Word *Patience* has its perfect Work, and divine *Consolations* enrich our Souls, we may look beyond all our present Trials, and rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God. For whatsoever was written afore-time, was written for our Learning, that we through *Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures* might have Hope. Here it may be proper to shew,

I. WHAT the *Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures* are, that *subserve our Hope of eternal Life*.

II. HOW the *Scriptures* are of use to promote these.

I. WE are to enquire, *What the Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures* are, that *subserve our Hope of eternal Life*? Let us consider each of these by themselves.

I. WHAT is the *Patience of the Scriptures* that *subserves our Hope*?

IT is not a stupid Indolence, or careless Insensibility of what befalls us; as if all the Passions of Human Nature were useless, or as if we were Stocks and Stones, incapable of being impress'd by any Thing. This is to despise the *Chastening of the Lord*, which we are cautioned against, as an unworthy, heedless Carriage toward him. Nor is it a rash and daring Hardiness of Spirit, that bids Defiance to



to all Evil, and is stubbornly resolute against <sup>SERM. VI.</sup> being concerned at any Calamity that may come upon us; as if we would force Human Nature to act contrary to the Laws of its own Being. This is to *harden our selves against God*: Job 9. 4. And, *who ever did so and prospered?* Nor is it a mere natural Fortitude of Temper to bear up under oppressing Circumstances: This is sometimes an Advantage, and at others a Disadvantage to us, according as it is managed. This is not properly a Virtue in it self, but a mechanical Effect of the natural Constitution of our Bodies, and of the peculiar Make of our animal Spirits. Nor is this Patience an heroic Bravery, from Principles of Philosophy, Manhood, and Honour, prompted forward by a selfish Pride, and fondness of Applause: This rises no higher than the shining Achievements of the Heathens, while they were <sup>Eph. 2. 12</sup> without Christ, being ——— Strangers from the Covenants of Promise, having no Hope, and without God in the World. Neither is it an Enthusiastick, and opinionative Resoluteness, as if there were a Merit in Sufferings: This is no more than Persons of the wildest Sects may be wrought up to by the Fire of their own Imaginations. None of these is that Patience which the Scripture gives, or which, in a scriptural Way, promotes our Hope of eternal Life.

BUT the Patience of the Scripture, which serves this Purpose, *regulates* our Passions, softens and improves them, instead of forcing or destroying them, or rendering them useless. It restrains and subdues them, instead of giving them up to their own natural Course, or to an inflexible Sturdiness. And it subjects them to the Guidance and Command of the



SERM. VI.

nobler Powers of the Soul, instead of subjecting those Powers to their blind and unbridled Impetuosity.

“ THIS Patience is a Christian Firmness of Spirit, to bear with Decency the various Afflictions and Trials we meet with, from an Exercise of Faith and Trust in God through Christ, of Love to him, of Resignation to his Will, and of affectionate Regards to eternal Glory beyond all temporal Interests or Pleasures whatsoever. This is the Patience that the Scripture speaks of and promotes, to the Furtherance of our Hopes of eternal Life.

THE Troubles we meet with in this Life are of various Kinds: Some common to Christians with other Men: And others peculiar to themselves on the Account of their Profession of Christ's Name. Some arise from the immediate Hand of Providence; others from our Friends; others from our Enemies; and, others from our selves.

BUT of what sort soever they are, and especially if they are such as befall us for the sake of Christ and Religion, the Patience of the Scriptures is a *Firmness of Spirit to bear them decently as becomes Christians*. Not to be dismay'd at them, or dispirited by them; nor to behave with an Air of Haughtiness, or Gaiety of Mind under them; but to be ready to endure them with a sober, calm, and undaunted Courage, like the Apostle Paul, who said, with respect to the *Bonds and Afflictions* that attended him, *None of these Things move me, neither count I my Life dear unto my self, so that I might finish my Course with Joy, and the Ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the Gospel of the Grace of God.* And at another Time,  
What

Acts 20.  
23, 24.

*What mean ye to weep, and to break mine Heart?* SERM. VI.  
*For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die* Acts 21.  
*at Jerusalem, for the Name of the Lord Jesus.* 13.  
Hence says Christ, *In your Patience possess ye your* Luke 21.  
*Souls.* Maintain a sedate Government of 19.  
your Spirits and Conduct, that no Troubles  
may ever disorder your Minds, inflave them  
to your tumultuous Passions, or break your  
inward Peace.

THIS holy Bravery and Firmness of Spirit,  
arises from an *Exercise of Faith and Trust in God*  
*through Christ*, that he will be with us to support  
us under, and carry us through our Trials and  
Afflictions, to glorify himself, and do us good  
by them, and at last to deliver us out of them  
all, and crown them with a gracious ample  
Reward. When the *Faith* of the *Thessaloni-*  
*ans* grew exceedingly, their *Patience*, with their 2 Thes. 1.  
*Faith in all their Persecutions and Tribulations,* 3, 4.  
*which they endur'd,* was so remarkable, as to  
give the Apostle occasion to glory in them in all  
the Churches. By Faith Moses esteemed the Re- Heb. 11.  
proach of Christ greater Riches than the Treasures of 26, 27.  
Egypt; for he had respect to the Recompence of Re-  
ward. By Faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the  
Wrath of the King; for he endur'd, as seeing him  
that is invisible. And by Faith, others of the Ver. 35.  
Worthies of Old were tortur'd, not accepting  
Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resur-  
rection. In the former Part of this Verse it is  
said, *Women* (such as the Widow of Zarephath,  
and the Shunamite, 1 Kings 17. 22, 23. and  
2 Kings 4. 36.) received their dead raised to Life,  
i. e. to this mortal Life, again [ἔλαβον γυναῖκες  
καὶ ἀναστρέψας τὸς νεκροὺς αὐτῶν] It seems to be in a  
beautiful Opposition to this, that a Resurrecti-  
on to an immortal Life is here mentioned un-  
der the Character of a better Resurrection.

SERM. VI. [καὶ τῶν ἀναστεινόντων] And these believing Hebrews, whose Faith was the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen, refused to accept Deliverance, or Redemption, [ἀπολύτρωσιν] upon any inglorious Terms, from the most cruel Death unto this temporal Life, that they might obtain through Faith and Patience a better Resurrection to eternal Life.

THIS Patience likewise proceeds from an Exercise of Love to God, to his Glory, and People, and Ways; that we may honour him, encourage them, and recommend his Ways, by our Example. Hence says the 1 Pet. 4. 14. Apostle Peter, *If ye be reproached for the Name of Christ, happy are ye, for the Spirit of Glory, and of God, resteth upon you: On their part he is evil spoken of; but on your part he is glorify'd.* And says 2 Tim. 2. 10. the Apostle Paul, *I endure all Things for the Elects sake, that they may also obtain the Salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal Glory.*

IT furthermore proceeds from a humble Resignation to the Sovereign Will and Pleasure of God, as every way righteous, holy, wise, and good, as what is fit for him to permit or do, and for us to bear; and as what we ought to submit to and approve of, so far as he is concern'd in it. Thus David reflecting on his Troubles with a Regard to God's providential Disposals about them, though others had a criminal Hand in them, says, *I was dumb, I opened not my Mouth; because thou didst it.* And our blessed Lord himself patiently endured his terrible Sufferings on this Principle, saying, *O my Father, if this Cup may not pass away from me, except I drink it, thy Will be done.* And at another Time, when his Enemies came to apprehend



hend him, *The Cup that my Father has given me, shall I not drink it?*

SERM. VI.

John 18.  
11.

To conclude this, the Patience of the Scriptures proceeds from *affectionate Regards to eternal Glory beyond all temporal Things*. It arises from a high Esteem, and deliberate Choice of the great and glorious Realities of the eternal World, from fervent Desires after them, Delight in them, and Preference of them, beyond all the Pleasures, Interests, and Honours, of this uncertain, dying, unsatisfying, and polluting World. The Loss of all earthly Comforts is nothing in the patient Soul's Esteem, compar'd with the Loss of heavenly Felicities. And all Sufferings of the worst kind in this Life bear no Proportion, in the Balance of Terrors and Delights, to the rich amends that will be made it in the next. This takes off its Opinion of Merit by its Sufferings; and yet, depending on the Grace and Faithfulness of a promising God, inspires it with a noble Patience under them, in the Prospects of a Reward of Grace. Hence the great Apostle could say, *Though our outward Man perish; yet the inward Man is renew'd Day by Day: For our light Affliction, which is but for a Moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal Weight of Glory: While we look not at the Things which are seen; but at the Things which are not seen; for the Things which are seen are temporal; but the Things which are not seen are eternal*. And it was a settled Account with him, according to which he reckon'd, that the Sufferings of this present Time, are not worthy to be compar'd with the Glory which shall be reveal'd in us. And therefore he waited with Patience under those Sufferings, in hope of the Glory which is not seen in this World; but is reali-



SERM. VI.

zed by Faith, and shall hereafter be revealed.

THIS Patience, arising from these Principles, is that which the Scripture recommends to us, exemplifies before us, inculcates upon us, and is the Mean of working in us. This Christian Patience out-shines the Glory, and darkens the Lustre of all other Pretences to it, This ennobles the Soul, gives it a true Greatness, keeps it in Possession of it self, and works up its Relish and Capacities for all the grand Entertainments of the undisturbed Mansions on high. This keeps the Soul steady and composed in the various shocking Trials of this Life, it strengthens us to bear them with a holy Magnanimity, it enables us to reflect upon them in such a calm and regular Light, as shews us how to improve them to the best Advantage; it carries Intimations to us, that the God of Patience is with us, it assures us, that the Principles of our Religion have not proved weak and ineffectual in us hitherto, and it fixeth our Resolutions by the Grace of God, to

Heb. 12. 1. cleave to him, to *run with Patience the Race that is set before us*; and to persevere in his Ways, and in our Profession of him, whatever Difficulties may hereafter attend it. And so it encourages and supports our Hopes of eternal

Chap. 10. Life, that *after we have done the Will of God, we shall receive the Promises*. Hence,

2. WE are now to consider, *What the Comfort of the Scriptures is, which likewise subserves our Hope*.

THIS Comfort of the Scriptures don't relate to that, which arises from worldly Prosperity, or from the Acquisitions of this Life. For though the Scriptures recommend *Godliness as profitable unto all Things, having Promise of the Life*

1 Tim.

4. 8.

*Life that now is, and of that which is to come:* SERM. VI.  
 And though they put us upon seeking first the Kingdom of God and his Righteousness, and assure us that all these Things, that is, all the Necessaries and Conveniencies of Life, as far as God sees them proper for us, shall be added to us: Yet these Intimations are made in such a manner, as has an evident Tendency to take our Hearts off from this World, that we might not rate our chief Happiness or Comforts by it, but by the spiritual, and much more valuable Blessings of the Kingdom of Grace here, and of the Kingdom of Glory hereafter. And the Scriptures are so far from encouraging the Christian's Expectations of great and flourishing Circumstances on Earth, or from promising him Solace in the Enjoyment of a Fulness of them; that it gives him reason to look for a Scene of manifold Disappointments and Troubles in outward Things, that he may place his highest Comforts in Christ, and in God through him. Hence said Christ to his Disciples, *these Things have I spoken to you, that in me ye might have Peace; In the World ye shall have Tribulation; but be of good Cheer, I have overcome the World.* And the Comfort of the Scriptures which our Text speaks of, is such Comfort as is intermix'd with Patience, and is assistant to it in all the afflictive Trials of it; which supposes that such Trials will befall us in this World.

THE Comfort therefore of the Scriptures is of a divine and spiritual Nature: It is the Comfort of God in the Soul to support us under, to balance against, and to carry our Views beyond all the uncomfortable Things of this Life; as David said, *In the Multitude of my Thoughts within me, thy Comforts delight my Soul.*

SERM. VI. And at another Time, Remember the Word unto thy Servant, upon which thou hast caused me to hope. This is my Comfort in my Affliction; for thy Word hath quickened me. And, unless thy Law had been my Delight, I should then have perished in mine Affliction.

It is the Joy of Faith, the Peace of a good Conscience, and the Comfort of the Holy Ghost.

It is Comfort that arises from believing Apprehensions; on scriptural Grounds, of the Forgiveness of all our Sins, and of the Favour of God in Christ to us, as our sure and all-sufficient Friend, which is called our joying in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we have now received the Atonement: And in his Favour is Life, and his Loving-kindness is better than Life. It must needs be a delightful Reflection, and a transporting Joy of Faith; for a Man to consider himself, as restor'd to a State of Peace and Friendship with the great Lord of Heaven and Earth; as freely pardon'd through the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and well-accepted in the Beloved; as the Object of his peculiar Love and Grace, who is God Almighty, has all Things in his Hands, is able to perform all Things for us, and has engaged himself by Promise, not to turn away from doing us Good; and never to leave us nor forsake us. And this is the Consolation of the Scriptures, that abounds to the Believer through Christ, under all the Tribulations he may meet with for his sake, according to the Experience of the Apostles, who found, that as the Sufferings of Christ abounded in them, so their Consolation abounded also by Christ. When we are enabled to commit our selves, and our All for Time and Eternity into the Hands of Christ, and of our Covenant God

and



and Father in him, how inimitable is the <sup>SERM. VI.</sup> Pleasure! how lightsome the inward Calm! *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind* <sup>Iſa. 26. 3.</sup> *is ſtayed on thee; becauſe he truſteth in thee.*

'Tis likewise Comfort that ariſes from a Conſciouſneſs of doing thoſe Things under a divine Influence, that are truly excellent in themſelves, and well-pleaſing to God through Jeſus Chriſt. *For our rejoicing, ſays the Apo-* <sup>2 Cor. 1.</sup> *ſtle, is this, the Teſtimony of our Conſcience, that* <sup>12.</sup> *in Simplicity, and godly Sincerity, not with fleſhly Wiſdom, but by the Grace of God, we have had our Converſation in the World. And great Peace,* <sup>Pſal. 119.</sup> *ſays the royal Pſalmiſt, have they that love thy* <sup>165.</sup> *Law; and nothing ſhall offend them. And again, In keeping his Commands there is great Reward.* <sup>Pſal. 19.</sup> There is a noble Pleaſure in ſerving the Lord <sup>11.</sup> with Uprightneſs of Heart, in acting up to the higheſt Principles of our Beings, and to the Obligations we are under as Men and Chriſtians, and in *walking worthy of the Lord unto all* <sup>Col. 1. 10.</sup> *pleaſing, being fruitful in every good Work. Me-* thinks the Satisfaction is more than Human, 'tis ſomething God-like and Divine, to have our Hearts rightly affected toward God, and full of the kindeſt Diſpoſitions toward Men, and to purſue our own Pleaſures in making others Happy.

It is a delightful Eaſe to be freed from the Throbs of a ſore Conſcience, and diſburden'd of the painful Reproaches of a guilty Mind; but it is a *Cordial*, as well as Relief, to ſenſe the Melody of a pure Conſcience in its Confidence toward God, and Cogniſcence of Integrity before him, without any Mixtures of allowed Guile. Who can find himſelf in ſuch a Caſe, and not reliſh *David's* Deſcription of Bleſſedneſs, ſaying, *Bleſſed is he, whoſe Trans-* <sup>Pſal. 32.</sup> *greſſion* <sup>1, 2.</sup>



**SERM. VI.** *gresson is forgiven, whose Sin is cover'd; blessed is the Man unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile! When a Man's Conscience carries within it a Testimony that he pleases God; that God has pardoned his Sins, and accepted him in Christ, and therefore accepts his Works of Faith and Love through him, how solacing is the Sensation, and what a sweet Savour doth it mix with the Taste of all the Comforts of Life! Such a Conscience is a continual Feast, and he that is so happy as to enjoy it, seems to*

**Ecclef. 9.** *hear the Almighty saying to him, Go thy way, eat thy Bread with Joy, and drink thy Wine with a merry Heart; for God now accepteth thy Works.*

AND when the Holy Ghost witnesses to all this, by and according to his Word in our Hearts, these Consolations of God cannot be small. He opens a Spring of all Delights within us to entertain the Mind and Heart, and makes Conscience so clear in its Verdict, that it dares to abide by it. He answers his Character, and acts the part of a Comforter: He scatters the Believer's Darkness, takes off his Discouragements, expels his Fears, revives and confirms his Hopes, binds up his Wounds, banishes his Sorrows, strengthens him with all Might in the inward Man, and gives him a rich Enlargement of sacred Liberty, Peace and Joy. He takes of the Things of Christ and reveals them to us, seals unto us the Pardon of our Sins, is a Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry *Abba*, Father, and sheds abroad God's Love in our Hearts. These Joys, and this Peace, are a Dawn and Earnest of Heaven, the Beginning and Foretaste of it; and when we are possess'd of these, we can't but have Hope, and the most lively Rejoicings in hope of

of the Glory of God. Hence the Apostle pray-  
ed for the *Romans* a little after our Text: *The*  
*God of Hope fill you with all Joy and Peace in be-*  
*lieving, that ye may abound in Hope through the*  
*Power of the Holy Ghost.* SERM. VI.  
Rom. 15.  
13.

THESE are Pleasures that have no Sting of  
their own, and that take out the Sting of all  
others. These are Comforts that we may ven-  
ture to indulge without Fear, or Danger of  
Excess. They give us another-guests Calm  
within, and more exalted Joys, than we can  
by any other Means attain to. And they  
settle the Soul in such a Peace as *no Man taketh* Joh. 16.  
*from it.* They will carry us with an undisturb-  
ed Serenity of Mind through all the Vicissi-  
tudes of this World, will be a Spring of rejoy- Gal. 6. 4.  
cing in our selves alone, and not in another, what-  
ever Opinion they may have about us; and  
will push us on to a holy Triumph through all  
Reproaches and Injuries for the sake of Christ,  
who has purchased them all for us, conveys  
them all to us, and will perfect them all in ever-  
lasting Felicities above. Hence the Apostles  
departed from the Presence of the Council, rejoicing, Acts 5. 41,  
that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his  
Name. And the believing Hebrews took joyfully Heb. 10,  
the spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves 34-  
that they had in Heaven a better and an enduring  
Substance. This Comfort of the Scriptures  
must be the most excellent, sublime, and satis-  
fying, that we are capable of in this imper-  
fect State of Things. It has some vital Pec-  
uliarities that can't be figur'd by Words; some  
melting Sensations, and some surprizing Beau-  
ties, that are too strong to be drawn to the  
Life by all the Powers of Language. 'Tis Joy 1 Pet. 1. 8,  
unspeakable and full of Glory. And it has some-  
thing more divine and promising than our own  
Thoughts

SERM. VI. Thoughts can form a complete Idea of; and therefore is call'd, *The Peace of God, that passeth all Understanding.*  
 Phil. 4. 7.

*The Second Part of Sermon VI.*

WE may now proceed to consider,

II. *How the Scriptures are of Use to promote this Patience and Comfort.*

I WOULD take up too much Time to carry your Thoughts to what might be offer'd on each of these apart; and therefore I rather chuse to consider them jointly under this Head, which, I hope, may be done without Impropriety, or Intanglement in the Discourse.

As I observ'd with respect to *Hope*, that God is the *Author* of it, and the Scriptures the *Means*, which he has appointed, owns, uses, and blesses, to beget it in us: The same must be observed with respect to this *Patience and Comfort*. And as in one of the following Verses the Apostle gives God the Title of *the God of Hope*; so in the Words immediately following our Text he styles him, suitable to the Nature of the Subject he is upon, *the God of Patience and Consolation*. It is delightful to remark in the Writings of this Apostle, how frequently he accommodates his Appellations of God to the Nature of the Discourse in hand, either to enlighten it, or to add the greater Force to it. According to this Beauty of Thought he here speaks of him under the Character of the *God of Patience and Consolation*, with reference to what he had just before said about the Use of the Scriptures to make us

Rom. 15.  
5.

Par-



Partakers of these Blessings. He hereby leads SERM. VII  
our Minds up to God, through the Scriptures,  
for them. He hereby instructs us, that the  
Scriptures are only the *Means*, but God is the  
*Author* of Patience and Comfort, and works  
them in us by those Means. And he hereby  
encourages our Faith, and earnest Prayer to  
him for them, as the Giver of them, that he  
would learn us by his Word how to obtain  
them, and would make that Word effectual to  
inrich us with them.

ACCORDINGLY *Patience* and *Comfort* are  
in other Places ascrib'd to God, as the Work-  
er of them in us. This Apostle speaks of be-  
ing *strengthened with all Might*, according to his Col. 1. 11.  
*glorious Power, unto all Patience and Long-suffer-  
ing with Joyfulness.* He prayed for the *Thessa-  
lonians*, that the Lord would direct their Hearts in-<sup>2</sup> Thes.  
to the Love of God, and into the patient Waiting for <sup>3</sup> 5.  
*Christ.* And he gave Thanks to God for them,  
because of their *Patience and Faith in all their* Chap. 1.  
*Persecutions and Tribulations that they endured.* <sup>3</sup> 4.  
And as our *Patience*; so our *Comforts* flow from  
him. He is the *Father of Mercies, and the God of* <sup>2</sup> Cor. 1.  
*all Comfort*, and suitable to this endearing Cha-<sup>3</sup> 4.  
*acter, he comforted his Servants in all their Tri-  
bulation.* He claims this Work as his own Pre-  
rogative, *I, even I am he that comforteth you.* Isa. 51. 12.  
And 'tis a standing Description of him, that he  
is the God, *that comforteth those that are cast down.* <sup>2</sup> Cor. 7. 6.  
He sends his Spirit as a *Comforter*, and gives  
his Children *everlasting Consolation, and good* <sup>2</sup> Tim. 2.  
*Hope through Grace; Comforts their Hearts, and* <sup>16, 17.</sup>  
*establisheth them in every good Word and Work,*  
that they may continue with *Patience* therein  
to the End.

BUT he gives this *Patience* and *Comfort* by  
proper *Means*; and makes use of his Word,  
and



- SERM. VI.** and of the Ordinances appointed in it for that purpose. He sets before us in the Scriptures a Cloud of Witnesses unto the Power of Faith, to make his People *patient* in all their Trials and Sufferings, that we by their Example may
- Heb. 12. 1.** be animated and influenced to *run with Patience the Race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus the Author and Finisher of our Faith.* And the Apostle Paul appeal'd to Timothy, that he
- 2 Tim. 3. 10, 11, 12.** had *fully known his Doctrine, manner of Life, Purpose, Faith, Long-suffering, Charity, Patience, Persecutions and Afflictions, &c.* But, said he, *out of them all the Lord delivered me. Yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer Persecution.* And hereupon he exhorted him
- Ver. 14.** to *continue in the Things which he had learned, and had been assur'd of, knowing of whom he had learned them, that he might copy after his Example, in all Long-suffering and Patience, with Faith and Hope of the same happy Success, and might make use of the Scriptures with that*
- Ver. 15.** *View, since they were able to make him wise to final Salvation, through Faith which is in Christ Jesus.* 'Tis likewise by the Scriptures that God communicates the Comforts he affords us. He order'd his Servants to *speak comfortably to his People, to strengthen the weak Hands, and confirm the feeble Knees, and to say to them that are of a fearful Heart, Be strong, fear not. And to shew that he will put Efficacy into their*
- Isa. 35. 3, 4.** *Words, and speak Comfort by them, I create the Fruit of the Lips, Peace ——— saith the Lord.* Hence David frequently pray'd, that God
- Chap. 57. 19.** *would strengthen and quicken him, and that his merciful Kindness might be for his Comfort, according to his Word. And the Apostle John wrote the Things, which he had seen and*
- Psal. 119. 25, 28, 76.** *heard, that the Joy of Believers might be full.*
- 1 Joh. 1. 3, 4.**

WE are therefore to consider how, by the Influence of God's Spirit and Grace with the Scriptures, they are of use to promote our Patience and Comfort.

1. *THEY recommend them to us in the most amiable Light.*

SUCH Patience, and such Comforts, so sublime and strong, are no where describ'd and set out, in all their Beauties before us, as they are in the Scriptures. The little Account we have now heard of them, gives us some Hints, how the Scriptures have display'd the Excellence of their Nature, Principles, and Tendencies, with the admirable Fitness of the Method in which they are to be obtain'd, beyond all that can be found in the boasted Instructions of the wisest among the *Heathen Moralists*. The Scriptures give us a noble, and inviting Idea of them, sufficient to make us in love with them, to raise our eager Desires, and invigorate our Pursuits after them, when they are set in a just and proper Light before our Minds. The Scripture Account of them shews 'em to be some of the greatest Ornaments, Improvements, and Felicities, that Human Nature is capable of in this disorder'd and miserable World, and the sweetest Supports of our Hopes of unmix'd Happiness and immortal Glory in the next.

WHO, that heartily believes the lovely Representation the Scripture makes of these noble Peculiarities of Christian Religion, can be contented without them? Or who, that has ever had a real Taste of their Powers, and is wakeful in the Temper of his Spirit, can bear the Thought of living without some Mixture of these to make this World a tolerable Station? The great Design of the Scripture runs

**SEAM. VI.** toward these, and all the Language of the inspired Writers about them, is of the same Tendency with what the Apostle says of the Phil. 4. 9. whole of his Doctrine and Practice: *These Things which ye have both learn'd and receiv'd, and heard, and seen in me, do: And the God of Peace shall be with you.*

2. THE Scriptures give us Assurance of the best Assistances for them.

WERE we to be left to our selves, the Scripture Recommendations of Patience and Comfort (lovely as they are) would make no prevailing Impressions upon us. The dark, the broken, the depraved, and the guilty Condition of a fallen World, fill up a Train of moral Incapacities to attain these scriptural Excellencies, till we are *renewed in the Spirit of our Mind*. They incline us to a natural Peevishness and Discomposure of Spirit, and prejudice us against the Gospel Method of curing them. They hide the Beauty of divine Consolations from us; they infeeble our Pursuits after them; they vitiate our Taste to a disrelish of them; and they dash to pieces our Expectations of enjoying them. And the God of this World, *who blinds the Minds of them that believe not, and who works in the Children of Disobedience*, takes the Advantage of their foolish, corrupt, and guilty Propensions, to push them into a greater Distance from these invaluable Benefits of a divine Revelation. Hence, in this Circumstance of Things, every Difficulty must needs over-match us, and we cannot of our selves successfully improve the Scriptures to the Christian Patience and Comfort, which they so admirably recommend.

2 Cor. 12. 9. But Christ's Grace is sufficient for us; for his Strength is made perfect in our Weakness.

THIS



THIS Grace is equally sufficient for us SAM. VI.  
 still, and the Scriptures raise our Expectations of it. They exclude none from reasonable Hopes that they may be Partakers of it; to make them comfortable and patient. They speak of God as the God of Patience and Consolation, able and willing in his own way to work them in us. They direct us to offer our Prayers to him through Christ for them, which supposes his Delight in Mercy, as he is a God *bearing Prayer*; and his Readiness to give those Psalm 65.  
 Blessings to all that ask them with Faith in the Name of Jesus, that great and compassionate High-Priest, *that is passed into the Heavens*, by whom we are encouraged to come boldly to the Heb. 4.  
 Throne of Grace, *that we may obtain Mercy, and* 14, 16.  
*find Grace to help in Time of need.* And the very first Principle of all our Addresses to God is, *that he that cometh to him, must believe that he* Chap. 11.  
*is, and that he is the Rewarder of them that dili-* 6.  
*gently seek him.* We have furthermore, in the Scripture, Thanksgivings offer'd to the Lord for the Patience and Comfort of those that have been favour'd with them, which supposes that 'twas he that gave those Blessings to them, and is a strong Encouragement to us to hope for the same, that by that Grace, which has exerted it self toward other unworthy, insufficient Creatures, like our selves, we may be wrought up to the Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures too.

And besides all this, we have many exceeding great and precious Promises of them to God's People in the Ways of his Appointment. *Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace, whose Mind is* Isa. 26. 3.  
*stayed on thee; because he trusteth in thee.* He Chap. 40.  
*giveth Power to the Faint, and to them that* 29, 31.  
*have no Might he increaseth, or will multiply,*



SERM. VI. [Heb. 11.] Strength. — They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their Strength; they shall mount up with Wings as Eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk and not faint. And, Isa. 41. 10. fear thou not, says God, for I am with thee; be not dismay'd, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee, yea, I will help thee, yea, I will uphold thee with the right Hand of my Righteousness. And in the New Testament, the Directions and Encouragements under all our Fears and Troubles are, Phil. 4. 6, 7. Be careful for nothing; but in every Thing by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgiving, let your Requests be made known to God: And the Peace of God, which passeth all Understanding, shall keep your Hearts and Minds through Christ Jesus. Again, 1 Pet. 5. 6, 7. Humble your selves under the mighty Hand of God, that he may exalt you in due Time: Casting all your Care upon him; for he careth for you. Heb. 13. 5. Once more, Let your Conversation be without Covetousness, and be content with such Things as ye have: For he hath said, I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.

THESE, with many other Promises of Blessings, that make up this Patience and Comfort, are plentifully dispersed through the Scriptures. And all the Promises of the Holy Spirit to enlighten, strengthen, sanctify, and comfort us, by means of his Word, which are Luk. 11. 13. summ'd up in this one Promise, Your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him; all these Promises have the same Aspect, and give us such Assurances of those Assistances from our gracious Covenant God, as are every way sufficient to beget this Patience and Comfort of the Scripture in us.

THE Grace, that made these Promises, shines in a self-evident Light, of its Willingness to perform them. And there can be no room

to doubt, but God is infinitely capable, and <sup>SEEM. VI</sup> abides faithful for that Performance. For the Lord knoweth how to deliver the Godly out of Temptations. And, says the Apostle Paul, There hath no Temptation taken you, but such as is common to Man: But God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but with the Temptation will also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it. What sure and happy Grounds are these for Faith and Trust in a promising God! What strong Assurances do they give us of such divine Aids, as are necessary to Patience and Comfort in all our Tribulations! And when we are enabled to make a fiducial Application of these suitable Promises to our selves, we may say with this Apostle, *I have learn'd in whatsoever State I am, therewith to be content. I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: Every where, and in all Things, I am instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. I can do all Things through Christ who strengthneth me.* O the Glories of Christian Religion!

3. THE Scriptures afford us the most powerful Motives and Engagements to this Patience and Comfort.

GOD deals with us in all the Operations of his Grace as free Agents, and as Subjects of moral Government, suitable to the reasonable Powers he has given us. He doth not push us forward by a brutish Impulse; but works upon us as Persons capable of learning his Will, and of being moved in a rational Way to approve of it, and to comply with it; and consequently as Persons capable of Sin and Duty, and of the just Punishments, and gracious Rewards that are entail'd upon them respectively. Hence he proposes proper Encouragements, Mo-

SERM. VI.

*tives, and Arguments, to Patience and Comfort in his Word, that our Understandings may apprehend their Importance, and that all the practical Powers of our Souls, our Wills, our Consciences, and Affections, may be answerably engaged and influenced by them. And by the light and gracious Impressions with which his Spirit accompanies these to our Souls, which is ordinarily done while we are seeking after them, or reflecting upon them, he in an agreeable and yet effectual manner,*  
 Phil. 2. 13. *worketh in us, both to will and to do of his good Pleasure, and gives his Children the Grace to be patient and comfortable.*

Now, besides those Considerations, that arise from the Excellence of Patience and Comfort, from the Intimations that they may be obtain'd, and from the Promises of God (which have already been taken Notice of) to encourage our Pursuits after them, and our Hopes of enjoying them, the Scripture affords the Christian a Variety of other Arguments to inforce them upon him.

THEY set before us God's rightful Dominion over us, and his governing Providence in all Things that concern us, that we may calmly resign to his Sovereign Will, and think our selves safe and happy under his Care. *Be still, and know that I am God.* They firmly assure us, that none of our Trials come by Chance; but all are order'd out to us according to his Will. And is it not meet that we should say with meek Submission, *Let him do what seemeth him good!*  
 1 Pet. 4. 19. *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the Will of God, commit the keeping of their Souls to him in well-doing, as unto a faithful Creator.* They remind us of our many Provocations, and great Unworthiness, for which God may justly sub-  
 ject



ject us to all manner of Sufferings, the forest SEAM. VI.  
of which in this Life are less than we deserve.

*Wherefore then doth a living Man complain, a Man* Lam. 3.  
*for the Punishment of his Sin?* They shew us our 39.

Obligations to Patience and Comfort, as they  
are enjoyn'd upon us by the Authority of God,  
and are well-pleasing in his sight. *Let Patience* Jam. 1. 4.  
*have her perfect Work, that ye may be perfect and*  
*intire, wanting nothing.* And, *rejoice in the* Phil. 4. 4.  
*Lord always, and again, I say, rejoice.* They

represent the great Difference between tem-  
poral and spiritual Things; how uncertain,  
empty, and perishing, all Things are in this  
World; and how sure, satisfying, and abid-  
ing, spiritual Blessings are, which relate to  
the next. And, what is the Language of all  
this, but that we should be patient under the  
various Afflictions of this Life, and fetch our  
Comforts from the Things of a better, as  
those that *reckon the Sufferings of this present Time* Rom. 8.  
*not worthy to be compared with the Glory that shall* 18.  
*be revealed in us?*

THE Scriptures explain to us God's holy,  
wise, and gracious Designs, in all the Trials  
that befall his Children, and assure us, that he  
sees them needful for the Exercise and Im-  
provement of our Faith, Love, Humbleness of  
Mind, Repentance, and many other Graces.  
They assure us of their *working together for Good*,  
that we may know God and our selves better,  
that our Affections may be weaned from this  
World, and set on Things above; that re-  
maining Corruptions may be mortify'd, and  
we may be made Partakers still more and more  
of God's Holiness, may be conform'd to the  
Image of his Son in Sufferings as well as  
Glory, and may not be condemned with the  
World.



SERM. VI.

AND they open these Views, that we might not only bear those Trials with Patience; but rejoice in them on the Account of the Profit we may gain by them. Hence says

Jam. 1. 2, the Apostle James, *My Brethren, count it all Joy when ye fall into divers Temptations. Knowing this, that the trying of your Faith works Patience.*

1 Pet. 1. 5, And says the Apostle Peter to those, who are kept by the Power of God through Faith unto Salvation. — *Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a Season (if need be) ye are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations; that the Trial of your Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be try'd with Fire, might be found to Praise and Honour, and Glory, at the Appearing of Jesus Christ. And the Author to the Hebrews urges Considerations of the like Nature, against despising the Chastening of the Lord on one Hand, or fainting when we are rebuk'd of him on the other. For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, &c. See the Place at your leisure, Heb. 12. 5 — 12.*

THE Scriptures shew us how the Glory of God, the Interest of Religion, and the Good of others, are promoted by our bearing Christ's Cross with Patience and Comfort, to excite us to them. If ye be reproach'd, says the Apostle Peter, *for the Name of Christ, happy are ye; for the Spirit of Glory and of God resteth upon you, on your part he is glorified.* And the

Col. 1. 24. Apostle Paul rejoiced in his Sufferings — *for Christ's Body's sake, that is, the Church, because the Credit of the Gospel, and the Faith, and holy Courage of the Church, might be advanced by his Christian Behaviour in them.*

Phil. 1. 14. *For many of the Brethren in the Lord waxing Confident by his Bonds, were much more bold to speak the Word without fear.*

THEY

THEY furnish us (as has been observ'd) SERM. VI. with a Variety of noble Examples of Saints, who suffered with Patience and Comfort on Earth, and have now got through all their Troubles and enter'd into Peace, to stir us up to a holy Emulation. And we may here add, that they particularly recommend the *Example of Christ* to us, who suffer'd more than any of us, and now triumphs in all his Glory; and who by his Sufferings for us has taken out the Sting of ours, and is every way qualified to succour us in ours; *for in that he* Heb. 2. 18. *himself has suffered being tempted, he is able to succour them that are tempted:* His Example is mentioned in the Words immediately before our Text, and is referr'd to in our Text, as one of the Means by which the Patience and Comfort of the Scriptures are promoted in us. And accordingly, with this View the Apostle recommends to us his Patience in Sufferings, *Who for the Joy that was set before him, endured the* Chap. 12. *Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the* 2. 3. *right Hand of the Throne of God. For consider him that endured such Contradiction of Sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your Minds.* And the Apostle Peter says, that Christians are called, and should be animated, to this Patience, in Imitation of their Lord, *Because* 1 Pet. 2. *he also suffer'd for us, leaving us an Example,* 21-24. *that they should follow his Steps; who did no Sin, neither was Guile found his Mouth; who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, threatened not; but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously; who his own self bare our Sins in his own Body on the Tree, that we being dead to Sin should live unto Righteousness; by whose Stripes they were healed.* What an invigorating Spirit is there in this way of arguing! What a melt-

SERM. VI.

ing, encouraging, and commanding Force, in such strong Representations of Christ's Temper and Behaviour in his Sufferings; of his never having deserved them; of his undergoing them for our Sins, and in our stead; and of their blessed Design and Effects as to us! How should the Thoughts of these soften our Trials, compose our Minds, and spread Pleasure through the Patience, that takes its Rise from, and is conformable to the Example of our dear and suffering Lord!

THEY enlarge upon the exceeding Riches of God's Grace to Believers, that he has given his Son to die for them, and has blessed them with all spiritual and heavenly Blessings in him; that he has pardon'd their Sins, justify'd, sanctify'd, and deliver'd them from the Wrath to come; that he hath receiv'd them into the Number and Privileges of his Children, taken them into his special Favour, Protection, and Guidance, and given them an Interest in himself as their God and Portion; that he has bestow'd inexpressibly greater Blessings upon them in his sure and well-ordered Covenant, than can be taken from them; and, that all his Ways are Mercy and Truth to them. Such Considerations as these, impress'd on our Hearts by Faith, are sufficient to reconcile us to all God's Dispensations,

Job 2. 10. and to make us say with Job, *What? Shall we receive Good at the Hand of God, and shall we not receive Evil?* And they are sufficient to raise even a Triumph in the midst of the worst Ca-

Rom. 8. lamities that can befall us. For, if God be for  
31. 32. 35 us, who can be against us? He that spared not his  
— 39. own Son, but delivered him up for us all; how shall he not with him freely give us all Things? Who shall separate us from the Love of Christ? Shall Tribulation,



tion, or Distress, &c? Nay, in all these Things we SERM. VI.  
are more than Conquerors, through him that loved  
us. For I am perswaded, that neither Death, nor  
Life, &c. shall be able to separate us from the Love  
of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

THE Scriptures likewise allure us to this  
Patience and Comfort, by the great Advan-  
tage and Pleasure we shall find in these Graces  
themselves. *Be careful for nothing; but in every Phil. 4.*  
*Thing, by Prayer and Supplication, with Thanksgi-*  
*ving, let your Requests be made known to God. And*  
*the Peace of God which passeth all Understanding shall*  
*keep your Hearts and Minds through Jesus Christ. And*  
*to crown all, they assure us that the Lord will in*  
*a little Time deliver his People out of all their*  
*Troubles, and receive them to a State of un-*  
*mixed Glory, infinitely preferable to the most*  
*desirable State of Things that can be enjoyed*  
*here. Many are the Afflictions of the Righteous; Psal. 34.*  
*but the Lord delivereth him out of them all. And,*  
*Blessed is the Man that endureth Temptation; for Jam. 1. 12.*  
*when he is try'd, he shall receive the Crown of Life,*  
*which the Lord has promised to them that love him.*  
*If we suffer with a Christian Temper with Christ, Rom. 8.*  
*we shall also be glorify'd with him. And the more*  
*we are conform'd to Christ in his Sufferings on*  
*Earth, the more like him we shall be in his*  
*Glory in Heaven. What a powerful Motive*  
*to Patience and Comfort is this, when our*  
*Faith can speak the Apostle's Language! The 2 Tim. 4.*  
*Lord shall deliver me from every evil Work, and*  
*will preserve me to his heavenly Kingdom. And,*  
*our light Affliction which is but for a Moment, 2 Cor. 4.*  
*worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal*  
*Weight of Glory.*

WITH these, and such like Motives and  
Engagements, the Scripture recommends Pa-  
tience and Comfort to us. And the Efficacy  
of



SERM. VI.

of these to work up our Hearts unto them, can't but be very prevailing, when they are duely considered, and set home upon us by the blessed Spirit.

THUS I have gone through what I proposed from these Words. And as what you have heard at this Time has been very much of an experimental Nature, there is the less need for me to add any farther Attempts to assist your Application of it. I hope, as we pass'd along, you consider'd all with relation to your selves, and that in your serious Reviews of this Discourse you will observe, whether, and how far, these Benefits of the Scripture have obtain'd in you, and what Assistance toward them, you, by the Blessing of God, may receive for the future from it. And therefore I shall only add two brief Reflections.

## R E F L E C T I O N S.

Reflect. I. *WHAT happy Provision has God made in the Scripture to render this World as tolerable and comfortable to his People, as its weak and disorder'd State can admit of!*

THIS World is not our Rest: Sin has so marr'd its Glory and Happiness, that it can't but be full of Disappointment and Sorrows. But the Patience and Comfort of the Scripture will make all as tolerable as the Nature of Things admits; will lighten every Burden, supple every Wound, keep us in Possession of our selves, and will intermix as solid, excellent, and satisfying Pleasures as we are capable of, while encompassed all around with Infirmities and afflictive Trials. These excellent Endowments mend the World, as far as they prevail, and give us the best Look we possi-

possibly can have in it, as far as we live under the Power of them. *O* blessed Word of God, which, by his Grace accompanying it, eases all our Burdens, clears our Way, and entertains us with the most delightful Refreshments, while we are journeying through the Land of our Pilgrimage!

Reflect 2. *How should this make the Believer long for Heaven!*

THE Patience and Comfort of the Scripture in this Life, is to promote our Hope of a better. Our Patience would soon fail, and our Comfort quickly die within us, was it not for the Hope that attends them, and has in its Turn an Influence to support them, as well as to be supported by them. 'Tis an invaluable Blessing, to have Patience to *bear up*, and Comfort to *rejoice*, in the midst of present Adversities. But *O*, how much better is it still to have Comfort *without* Adversity, and to live in a State of *unallay'd* Felicities, that needs Patience no more for ever! To have all Calls for Patience cease, and all Comforts perfected in unclouded and eternal Triumphs! And this we have the most assuring Hope of by the Gospel. We should therefore be looking for the blessed Hope, and glorious Appearing of the great God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ; when all Weakness, Sin, and Sorrow, Fear and Trouble of every Kind, shall be for ever banished from us, and we shall enter into Light and Love, unblemished Holiness, and ecstasick Joys, without Interruption, Abatement, or End; and when our vile Bodies shall be changed, and fashioned like to Christ's glorious Body.

THOUGH Patience and Comfort are the most desirable Things of this World; yet the Scriptures are written to give us Hopes of

# 172 How the Scriptures are useful, &c.

SEAM. VI. of a more exalted State still; and we don't use them as we ought, unless our Desires are in warm Pursuit of all that they give us the Hopes of. And therefore, though we should patiently wait for it in God's Way and Time; yet the Language of our Hearts should be, *I would not live here always; but, if God's Time were come, and my Work on Earth were done, would much rather desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.*

Phil. i. 23.



of  
the  
most desirable Things of this World; yet  
these are written to give us Hopes  
SER-  
and fashioned like to Christ's glorious Body.  
End: and when our vile Bodies shall be changed, Phil. i. 23.  
joy, without Intermission, or  
Love, unblemished Innocence, and everlasting  
from us, and we shall enter into Light and  
life of every kind, for ever banished  
Weakened, Sin, Fear and Trem-  
ever God, and ever in his Arms, when all  
for the blessed  
the Gospel.  
And this  
be looking  
the Gospel.



# SERMON VII.

COL. iii. 16.

The former Part of the Verse

**Let the Word of Christ dwell in you  
richly, in all Wisdom.**

THE Scripture is a Subject so en-  
tertaining and improving, and  
the Christian's Life, Interests and  
Hopes, are so nearly concern'd  
in it, that our Pleasure and Ad-  
vantage must needs rise in Proportion to  
our intimate Heart-Acquaintance with it.  
The Words now recited give us a fair Oppor-  
tunity to graft some farther Sentiments upon,  
and to bring still nearer to our selves, what  
has been advanced about its *standing Use*, from  
another Text. I have therefore chosen them to  
lead our Meditations a little farther into the vast  
and



and important Province in this, and some following Discourses. O! may the blessed Author of the Word assist both Speaker and Hearers to understand and apply it, and to get full Possession of it!

THE Apostle, having in the two foregoing Chapters represented the Gospel in a glorious Light, to confirm the *Colossians* in the Faith they had receiv'd, and to guard them against the Corruptions, that judaizing Teachers attempted to introduce among 'em, in this and the following Chapter (according to his usual Method in all his Epistles) adds some practical Directions and Exhortations, to build them up in all Grace and Christian Obedience, on the Principles of their most holy Faith. Some of his Exhortations are unto Duties, that concerned them as *Christians in general*; and others to such as concern'd them in their several *relative Capacities in particular*. The first Sort of these Exhortations are drawn out from the beginning of this Chapter to the 17th Verse, which immediately succeeds our Text: And the second are carry'd on in the remaining Part of this Chapter, and the beginning of the next.

IN the first of these, down to our Text, he recommends and enforces by several Arguments, heavenly *Mindedness*, *Mortification of Sin*, and the Exercise of *Christian Love* in all its sweet and amiable Forms of *Brotherly Mercies*, *Kindness*, *Humbleness of Mind*, *Meekness*, *Long-suffering*, *Forbearing*, and *Forgiving one another*; and above all these Things (as that which summarily comprehends, and is the true Principle of them all) *Charity*, which is the *Bond of Perfection*; and, together with these, the Dominion of the *Power of God* in their

their Hearts, Chap. 3. 1—15. And then he brings them in our Text, to the only Rule, according to which all these were to be regulated, and directs them to possess themselves of it, for these, and all other Spiritual Purposes.

LET the Word of Christ dwell in you richly, in all Wisdom. In these Words we have,

First, A PECULIAR Character of the Scripture. It is the Word of Christ.

Secondly, THE Entertainment we ought to give it. Let it dwell in you.

Thirdly, THE Manner in which we should give it that Entertainment. Let it dwell in you richly, and in all Wisdom.

THIS lays out the natural Method of our Discourse; and accordingly I shall speak to these three Things in their Order, and add something for Improvement of them severally. We are to consider,

First, THE peculiar Character our Text gives of the Scripture. 'Tis the Word of Christ.

By the Word of Christ we may understand more particularly that Part of Scripture, that makes up the Gospel of Salvation, which at the Heb. 2. 3. first began to be spoken by the Lord Christ, and was confirm'd to us by them that heard him: Or, more generally, the whole Revelation of the Will of God in all the Scriptures both of the Old and New Testament. 'Tis in this most extensive View that our Apostle seems to take it, by his speaking in the Remainder of the Verse, of teaching and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, which look with a very strong Aspect toward the Old Testament

Writ-

**SERM. VII.** Writings, some of which are set forth under the several Titles; and in this View I propose to consider it, as most suitable to the Design for which I fixed upon it.

THOUGH the Scriptures consist of many Discourses, Sentences and Words; yet, as collectively taken, they are one divine Charter, one Rule of Faith, or one System of supernatural Revelation; in Distinction from all Doctrines of Men, they may be call'd in the singular Number, *The Word of Christ*. This Figure of Speech, in like Cases, is not unusual in other Writers, or among our selves. Thus, we say, a Man has given his *Word* for a Thing, which, perhaps, by many Promises, he has engaged himself to do. And we speak of the *Law of Great Britain*, meaning the whole Body of its Laws, in Distinction from those of other Nations. Accordingly the sacred Writings very frequently use the like Form of speaking concerning themselves, under the Titles of the *Word of God*, and in our Text the *Word of Christ*.

My further Aim in speaking to this Character of the Scripture, is to shew, *How, or in what respects, it may be call'd the Word of Christ*. And this may be considered as he is the *Author*; as he is the great *Subject* of it; and as he *works, and carries on his Interest* by it.

I. CHRIST is the *Author of the Scripture*. It was writ by the Inspiration of his Spirit, and bears the Stamp of his Authority.

Exod. 3.

2, 4.

compared  
with

Chap. 4.

12.

'T WAS Christ who is call'd the Lord [*Heb. Jehovah*], and the Angel of the Lord, that appear'd to Moses in the Bush, and gave him his Commission, and said, *I will be with thy Mouth, and teach thee what thou shalt say*. And the Apostle Peter refers what the Prophets of the Old



Old Testament said, to the Spirit of Christ, as <sup>SERM. VII.</sup> revealing it to them, and testifying of it in and by them, they in the mean while *search- 1 Pet. 1. 11.* ing what, or what manner of Time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified before Hand the Sufferings of Christ, and the Glory that should follow. What the Spirit did in that Affair, he did as the Spirit of Christ. Christ therein acted by him as his own Spirit, essentially united with him, and inseparable from him. And consequently 'twas Christ's own Act, or that which himself did by his Spirit. Hence this Apostle speaking of the Spirit's striving with a disobedient Generation in the Days of Noah, who were afterwards destroyed by the Deluge, and are now shut up in the Prison of eternal Darkness, calls it Christ's preaching to them by the Spirit: *By which he went and preached to the Spirits in Chap. 3. Prison.* And we are assur'd, with respect to <sup>19.</sup> the Scriptures of the Old Testament, That *holy Men of God spake as they were moved by the 2 Pet. 1. Holy Ghost.* And agreeable to this, those <sup>21.</sup> Scriptures are cited as the *Sayings of the Holy Ghost*; and what he signified by them is taken Notice of in the Explication of the New Testament. See, among other Places, *Acts 28. 25. Heb. 3. 7. & 9. 8.*

AND as Christ was the Author of the Old Testament, so he was of the New. He began to make known its Contents by his own Acts and Preaching, and afterwards by an Interpretation, or infallible Guidance of the Apostles, by whom he came and preach'd Peace to the *Eph. 2. 17. Gentiles*, as well as Jews, or to them which were *Mat. 28. afar off*, and to them that were nigh. Christ *19, 20.* gave them their Commission to teach all Nations. He limited their Commission to his own



**SER. VII.** Instructions, so that they were to teach only *whatsoever he commanded them*: And he promised to be with them in their Discharge of that Trust. *Lo, I am with you alway, even to the End of the World.* Surely this Promise must relate as much to what they should teach by Writing, as by Preaching. And what we have in the Scriptures contains all that we certainly know of what they preach'd.

**THEIR** Writings were to supply the Want of their Preaching; for they wrote the Things they preach'd, that *after their Decease* the Churches might *have them always in Remembrance.* And therefore all that is said of their Preaching, that it was the *Gospel, the Word, the Commandment, and the Testimony of the Lord,* and that they *received it from his Spirit,* must be equally true of their Writings: Especially considering that those Writings were designed to be of more lasting Use, as the Unchangeable Rule of all divine Faith and Obedience, which can have nothing less for their Foundation, than the Testimony and Commands of the Divine Being himself.

**AND** if Christ promised that, when they should be brought before *Kings and Rulers,* he would *give them a Mouth and Wisdom,* and that it should be *given them in that same Hour what they should speak,* so that it was not they that should speak by their own Wisdom; but 'twas the Spirit of their Father that should speak in them. How can we suppose that they had less Assistance, when they were employed in the most important Work of settling the Rule of the Christian Faith which they preached, for all succeeding Generations?

**AND** though sometimes the Behaviour of the Apostles before *Rulers* might look, as if they

they were not under an Influence answerable <sup>SEEM, VII.</sup> to these Promises; as particularly, when the Apostle Paul seem'd not to treat *Ananias*, the High Priest, with the Decency due to his publick Character, saying to him, *God shall smite thee, thou whited Wall*, and to excuse it afterwards by an Acknowledgment of his Mistake concerning that Character, saying, *I wist not, Ver. 9. Brethren, that he was the High Priest*: Yet it doth not appear to me, that there was any Thing in that Management inconsistent with the Influence promised for such an Occasion. For it can't be imagin'd that they were Promises of an *unlimited* Inspiration, as to all Particulars whatsoever; but they are evidently to be understood as Promises of only such Degrees of it, as should suggest to them all that the Spirit, by which they spoke, might see needful for them to be reminded of, or acquainted with at such Seasons. And supposing the Apostle was mistaken, as to *Ananias's* being the High Priest, God might, for Reasons best known to himself, suggest nothing to him about the Character of the Person he spoke to; but only influence him to speak what was very proper, and what might be allow'd to be so, with regard to the *unrighteous Procedure* which he then reflected upon, according to the Apprehensions he had of the Person that order'd it, and afterwards to make the Acknowledgement that became him, as soon as he was inform'd that that Person was the High Priest.

BUT some of the most accurate Criticks have observ'd, that there may be two other Senses of the Apostle's Answer; our admitting of either of which, I humbly think, takes off the whole Difficulty of this Case. One is,

SERM. VII. that he did not *know*, or own *Ananias* for the High Priest, because he had not a legal Title to the Priesthood; either according to Christian Principles, Christ the only great High Priest being now come; or, according to Judaick Principles, *Ananias* having obtain'd that Dignity only by Bribery, and therefore even in the Judgment of their own *Rabbins* he ought not to be honour'd as a *Ruler*. But had he been legally and truly what he pretended to, the Apostle acknowledged he should have treated him with more regard; assigning this Reason of it, *For it is written, Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People*. The other Sense is, that he did not just then *advert* to, or *reflect* in his *Mind* upon *Ananias's* being the High Priest. The propetick Impulse, which he then was under, did not permit him to *advert* to the Character of the Person he was speaking to, lest it should have put some check upon his Compliance with that Impulse, because *it is written, Thou shalt not speak Evil of the Ruler of thy People*. Though in truth that Law did not bind him, whilst he was acting a Prophet's Part in his Reproof. And, if according to the Accounts the Learned have given, *Ananias* was afterwards either *depos'd*, and sent bound to *Rome*, or was *slain* in a remarkable Manner, and so *smitten* of God according to the Apostle's Prediction, that was a plain Proof of his speaking those seemingly obnoxious Words under Divine Inspiration, and consequently, that Christ's Promises, relating to such an Occasion, were then fulfill'd to him. Nor can I easily think that a Man of his excellent, evangelick Spirit, would have express'd himself in that Manner from the Instigation of *private Resentment*; or, that a Man of his great



great Prudence, and watchful Concern for SERM. VII. the Interest of the Gospel, would have hazarded the Credit of his Apostolick Character by such a Prediction, unless he had been assur'd it would come to pass. But if after all, this, or any such like Instances, could not be so clearly accounted for, as might be desir'd, methinks it becomes us much rather to suspect our Capacities of thoroughly reconciling them to Christ's Promises, than to suspect his Faithfulness to those Promises, which he so expressly delivered more than once in such absolute, plain, and peremptory Terms. But to return.

WHATEVER Disputes there may be about the *Nature* and *Degrees* of Inspiration: Whether it be by strict Revelation and immediate Dictate, or by Excitation, Guidance, or Government of the Mind and Expression, according as the Things to be written were such as the inspired Writers *were*, or *were not*, before acquainted with: There is, I think, abundant Evidence of their having been under such infallible Influence from Christ, as directed and authorized them what to write, and secured them from Error in their Writings; so that every Thing needful should be said about, and no Injury should be done to any Article of the Christian Faith. And this makes Christ the Author of them, which is all that my present Work calls me to set before you.

THE Books of the *New Testament* are principally *historical*, *doctrinal*, and *prophetical*. And we have strong Intimations in Christ's Promises of the Spirit to his Disciples, that they should have an infallible Assistance for all these; as that he should *bring all Things to*



**SERM. VII.** *their Remembrance, teach them all Things, and shew them Things to come. And according to AAs 2. 4. his Promise they were all filled with the Holy Ghost on the famous Day of Pentecost, and then began to speak — as the Spirit gave them*

**Ver. 11.** *Utterance. As they then began to speak the wonderful Works of God under the Inspiration of his Spirit; so they continued to do it afterwards, as Occasions required. For we are*

**Chap. 4.** *assured after this, that they were all again filled with the Holy Ghost, and spake the Word of God*

**31.** *with Boldness; and the Word of Wisdom, the*

**1 Cor 12.** *Word of Knowledge and Prophecy, are represented among other extraordinary Gifts, as the continuing Work of the Spirit, whenever he pleased.*

**8, 10.**

THE Apostle likewise speaks of Prophecy, under the Notion of Preaching, or speaking to Edification, Exhortation and Comfort, as an extraordinary Gift of the Spirit, which continued to the greatest Advantage of the Churches before the New Testament Writings were form'd and spread among them (1 Cor. 14. 1, 3.) And he represents those that had this Gift, as having a Revelation, ver. 26. and the Things they were to speak, as revealed to them, ver. 30.

ACCORDINGLY, all the New Testament was written by inspired Men. The Apostles of our Lord Jesus wrote the whole, except what was done by the Evangelists Mark and Luke; and these are generally allow'd to have been of the Number of the Seventy, who receiv'd a Commission from Christ like that of the Apostles, needed like extraordinary Assistances of the Spirit for the Execution of it, had like Promises of them, and must in all reason be supposed to be part of the Hundred and

and Twenty, that were with the Apostles, and were filled with the Holy Ghost, as well as they, on the two remarkable Times before mentioned, Acts i. 15. compared with Chap. 2. 4. and Chap. 4. 23, 31. SERM. VII.

Now, as to the *Historical Parts* of the New Testament, Christ promised that his Spirit should bring all Things to their Remembrance, *whatsoever he had said unto them.* Accordingly, I cannot see any sufficient Reason why the Evangelist Luke's Introduction to his History might not be render'd, *It seemed good to me also, having had perfect Understanding of all Things FROM ABOVE, to write to thee in order, most excellent Theophilus.* The Adverb [*ἀνωθεν*] which our Translators have here render'd *from the very first*, is, as far as I find, used in that precise Sense but in one other Place in the New Testament, is a very different Word from that, which in the foregoing Verse is justly rendered *from the Beginning*, it most strictly and properly signifies *from above*, is very often used in that Sense in other Places, and understanding it in that genuine Meaning of it here, it most directly answer'd Luke's Design in this Introduction, which was to give such a Recommendation of his Gospel to Theophilus, as should satisfy him, that by its Accounts he might know the CERTAINTY of those Things wherein he had been instructed by others, who had set forth Declarations of them, even as they had delivered them, who from the Beginning were Eye-witnesses, and Ministers of the Word. And he therein seems to refer to such Accounts, as several well-meaning Persons had handed about concerning those Things, according to what they had gathered from the Reports of such as were Eye-witnesses of them,

**SER. VII.** rather than to the other Gospels, which now make up some Parts of the Scripture. For 'tis very uncertain, whether any one of those was written before *Luke* wrote his Gospel, or no.

IF it should be objected, that the Evangelists did not write under Inspiration, because they contradict one another in their Reports of several Things; I desire it may be observed, that those *seeming* Contradictions are as much in Instances, which the Evangelists could not but have as certain Knowledge of without an Inspiration, as of most other Things whatsoever. Some of those Instances are, the Course of the Passovers during Christ's Ministry; *Peter's* denying him before the Cock crew; and his Resurrection on the *Third Day*. And therefore the Differences in their Reports of these are to be accounted for by other Methods (which may be found in several Commentators) and not by charging them on their Mistakes. For if we suppose them to be mistaken in their Accounts of such plain and well known Things as these, when can we be sure that their Narratives may be depended on? But to proceed.

'TIS not easy to conceive that the Evangelists, without the Benefit of Christ's Promise, should have been able to record his long Sermons and Discourses, several Years after they were delivered, with that Exactness and Certainty, that was necessary to be a just Foundation of a firm, and much more of a divine Faith in Things of the last Consequence, the Sense of which might often receive a very different Turn, barely from the Misreport of a single Word. The same may be likewise said with respect to the Doctrines of the *Apostles*,  
in.



in their Sermons, Speeches, Conversation and <sup>SEAM. VII.</sup> Apologies, which are related in the *Acts*. The vast variety of *Sentiments* rehearsed in the *Gospels*, and in the *Acts*, and the numerous Circumstances that attended many of the *Facts* recorded there, made it next to impossible but that the Writers of them, however wise and honest Men, must have been liable, especially so long after the Date of the Things themselves, to misreport them in several Instances; had they been left to the Strength of their own, or other People's Understandings and Memories in the ordinary Way. This would fling the Original of their Histories, and of the Doctrines they contain, into the State of *oral Tradition* for the Space of all those Years that preceeded the Writing of them, and would give them no more Certainty as to us, than such Tradition could afford them. But it don't seem agreeable to the Wisdom, Goodness, and Righteousness of God, to put the only Rule of Faith upon such a fallible Bottom, and to oblige us, under the severest Penalties, to such a steadfast Adherence to it, as is demanded in that Rule it self; which, among other Things, tells us, *That whoever shall be* Luke 9.1 *ashamed of Christ, and of his Words, or Doctrine* 26.

(which we know nothing of any farther than the Scriptures report them) *of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's, and of his holy Angels.*

OR, if we suppose, that the sacred Historians got what Assistance they could from the Memoirs of others; yet if they were under no superior Influence, as to what they should take, or refuse, of the several scattered Hints they might meet with, Uncertainties must attend them still. Upon the whole then, God's  
some-



**SECT. VII.** Some way conducting their Minds with infallible Influence in those Narratives, was needful to secure a just and entire Credit to them; and admitting that he did this, which has a Foundation both in Scripture, and in the Reasons of Things, all is safe and stable.

As to the prophetick Parts of the New Testament, which I take leave to mention next, the Nature of them speaks for themselves. All their Truth entirely depends on a divine Revelation; and Christ promised his Spirit to  
 Joh. 16. shew his Disciples Things to come. And the  
 13. Apostle John's Prophecies begin with the Style  
 Rev. 1. 1. of the Revelation of Jesus Christ.

AND as to the Doctrines set forth by the Apostles in their Epistles, Christ promised his  
 Joh. 14. Spirit to teach them all Things; to guide them  
 26. into all Truth; and to take of his Things, and  
 Chap. 16. shew them unto them, even those many Things  
 13, 14. which he had to say unto them, but they could not  
 Ver. 12. bear them then. In like manner, when Paul  
 was afterwards called to the Apostleship, Christ seemed to promise him a continued Inspiration, as there might be Occasion for it,  
 Acts 26. saying, I have appeared unto thee — to make  
 162 thee a Minister, not only of those Things which thou hast seen; but likewise of those Things in which I will appear to thee, which may relate to the future Revelations Christ would make to him both by outward Visions, and by the inward Suggestions of his Spirit; according to what the Apostle several Times afterwards said about both those Ways of Christ's revealing his Mind and Will to him.

WITH this Furniture this Apostle wrote his Epistles, which make up a great Part of the New Testament, and declares in one of  
 Gal. 1. 12. them, that he neither received the Gospel of  
 Man,

Man, neither was he taught by the Revelation SERM. VII  
of Jesus Christ. In another he says, what he Eph. 3. 5.  
wrote was revealed to Christ's holy Apostles and 1 Cor. 2.  
Prophets by that Spirit. In another he says, He 1, 10.  
came declaring to them the Testimony of God, and  
the Things that he had revealed by his Spirit; and  
calls the Things he wrote, the Commandments of Chap. 14.  
the Lord. And in another he expresses himself 37.  
in these Terms: Ye know the Commandments we 1 Thes. 4.  
gave you by the Lord Jesus; and this we say unto 2, 15.  
you by the Word of the Lord. Hence he called  
the Words he used in his Writings, The Words 1 Cor. 2.  
which the Holy Ghost teacheth, and arow'd to 13, 16.  
those to whom he wrote, that he had the Mind of  
Christ. And he seems to mean his own Epistle  
to Timothy, when he sharply rebukes those 1 Tim.  
that should teach otherwise, and consent not to 6. 3.  
wholesome Words, even the Words of our Lord Je-  
sus, as bearing his Authority, because Spoken  
under Inspiration from him: For no particu-  
lar Words of Christ are here quoted; but  
they may be very naturally explained by the  
Close of the Verse, to mean the Doctrine which Chap. 1.  
is according to Godliness. And so what he says 3, 10.  
here, answers to the Cautions he had given  
before against those, that taught any other Do- 2 Epist.  
ctrine than himself taught, or any other Thing 1. 13.  
that is contrary to sound Doctrine. And this, in  
his next Epistle to Timothy, he calls the Form of  
sound Words, which thou hast heard of me. How  
strong and significant are many of those Ex-  
pressions to induce a Perswasion of his Inspi-  
ration in what he wrote? And we cannot sup-  
pose him either to be mistaken in his own Case,  
or to design to set out the Character of his Wri-  
tings, and raise our Veneration of them high-  
er than he thought was their Due, without  
the hardest Reflections on his Abilities, or on  
his

**Serm. VII.** his Integrity, for which Reflections there is no shadow of Pretence.

SUCH emphatical Intimations, as we have taken Notice the Apostle sometimes gave of his being inspired in what he wrote, were very proper and needful, with respect to those especially, that questioned his apostolick Authority, as the false Teachers, and some under their Influence, did. But where that was admitted, I apprehend that Character it self sufficiently spoke the same Language, as to all Things which belong'd to it. And that his Writings belong'd to it, appears from his prefacing almost all of them with Assertions of that Office, as in *Gal. 1. 1.* and *Rom. 1. 1.* with several others. And he accordingly wrote as from Christ himself, ordinarily sending them such like Salutations from Christ as this; *Grace to you, and Peace from God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ,* in *Rom. 1. 7.* and *Gal. 1. 3.* and in most of the other Epistles.

THIS Apostle's Distinction (in *1 Cor. 7. 6, 10, 12, 25.*) of what not he, but the Lord commanded, from what he spoke, and not the Lord; and from what he spoke by Permission, and as having no Commandment of the Lord; and yet gave his Judgment as one that had obtain'd Mercy of the Lord to be faithful, is not, as I apprehend, a sufficient Objection against what has been alledg'd from other Places. For if, as some understand it, he thereby means, that he then spoke the Particulars there mentioned, as his private Opinion, and not by divine Suggestion; this shews his great Integrity and honest Simplicity, in giving such plain Notice, when he ventur'd to offer only his private Thoughts; and is a good Argument that, where he don't give the like Notice, he is to be understood

as



as speaking under Inspiration. The like may SERM. VII.  
 be said of any other Instances, where his  
 manner of speaking directs us to think he on-  
 ly spoke his *private Desires or Hopes*. Or if,  
 as others understand it, he thereby means to  
 distinguish what he additionally offer'd by the  
 present Suggestion of the Spirit, from what  
 Christ had said before in his *personal Ministry*,  
 against the *Wife's departing from her Husband*,  
 then it has no shadow of Objection in the Case  
 before us; but is rather an Attestation to the  
 Truth of those Gospels, which were probably  
 written before this Epistle, and which re-  
 cord our Lord's own Determination about  
 that Matter in *Mat. 19. 9.* and *Luke 16. 18.*  
 But to return.

THIS Apostle quotes a Passage from the  
 Evangelists, as a part of Scripture, of the  
 same Authority with the *Old Testament*, *1 Tim.*  
*5. 18. The Scripture saith, Thou shalt not muzzle*  
*the Ox that treadeth out the Corn, and the Labourer*  
*is worthy of his Reward.* This last Passage is  
 no where to be found in the Scripture of the  
 Old Testament; but is extant *Verbatim* in the  
 Greek of *Luke 10. 7.* and with the Change of  
 but one Word, in *Mat. 10. 10.* The Apostle  
 Peter gave like Testimony to the divine Autho-  
 rity of the Epistles of the Apostle Paul, when  
 he referr'd to them, and approved of all then  
 extant, as *written according to the Wisdom given* *2 Pet. 3.*  
*unto him, and rank'd them with the other Scrip-* *15, 16.*  
*tures, as bearing the same emphatical and di-*  
*stinguishing Name with them.* And this  
 Apostle puts his own, and the rest of the  
 Apostles Writings, on the same foot of divine  
 Authority, as he doth the Writings of the an-  
 cient Prophets, when he says, *This second Epi-* *2 Pet. 3.*  
*stle, Beloved, I now write to you, in both which* *1. 2.*  
fir.



**SEEM. VII.** stir up your pure Minds by way of Remembrance; that ye may be mindful of the Words which were spoken before by the holy Prophets, and of the Commandment of us the Apostles of the Lord and Saviour.

**HENCE** what the Apostles delivered was  
**Luk. 10. 16.** to be received as the Word of Christ; for he that heareth you, saith our Saviour to them, heareth me. And the Apostle Paul spoke it to  
**Gal. 4. 14.** the Commendation of the Galatians, that they received him, with respect to his Doctrine, — even as Christ Jesus. But this they ought, by no means to have done, unless what he delivered to them had been indeed the Word of Christ, under the unerring Conduct of his Spirit, in the Discharge of his Apostolick Office among them. But the Doctrines conveyed to us by their Writings, are call'd the Word  
**Eph. 6. 17.** of God, the Testimony of God, and the Oracles of  
**1 Cor. 2. 1.** God, as given forth by Inspiration from him.  
**Heb. 5. 12.** And Thanks were offered for the Thessalonians, that they received the Apostle's Word, Not as the Word of Men; but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God. And their Gospel, in Conjunction with the Scriptures of the Prophets, is said  
**Rom. 16. 25, 26.** to be made known to all Nations for the Obedience of Faith.

To conclude this Head, as we can't reasonably suppose that God should more immediately concern himself in the Writings of the Old Testament, than of the New, it may as certainly be said of both, as of one, that he  
**Luk. 1. 70.** spake by the Mouth of his holy Prophets, which have been since the World began; and that, all Scripture is given by Inspiration of God. And all this  
**2 Tim. 3. 16.** Inspiration proceeding from the Spirit of Christ, whom he promised to send to his Disciples, the New Testament, as well as the Old, must

## Christ the great Subject, &c.

191

must be referred to Christ as the Author of it. SERM. VII.  
Accordingly, the Spirit of Prophecy is call'd the Rev. 19.  
Testimony of Jesus. And what the Apostles de- 10.  
livered under Inspiration from him, is call'd  
the Word of the Lord, and the Word of the Lord  
Jesus, just in the same manner as at other 2 Thes. 3. 1.  
Times, and in the same Context, it is call'd  
the Word of God. Acts 19. 10, 20.

### The Second Part of Sermon VII.

II. **T**HE Scripture is the Word of Christ, as he  
is the great Subject of it. Or, as it is a  
Revelation of Christ to us.

THE Light of Nature, assisted by the  
Works of Creation and Providence, gives us  
some Notices of God; but gives us none of  
the distinct Persons in the Godhead, or of God  
incarnate. It leads us to God the Creator;  
but says nothing of God the Redeemer. It  
suggests Apprehensions of an offended Deity;  
but is altogether silent about the great Medi-  
ator that alone is able to appease him. Till  
the Gentiles were enlightened by the Gospel,  
they were without Christ, without any Know-  
ledge of him, and so without good Hope, and  
without the right Knowledge of the true God in Eph. 2. 12.  
the World.

THE Scriptures only are the Word of  
Christ, by which he is discovered to us. They  
are a divine Revelation concerning Jesus Christ Rom. 1. 3.  
our Lord. They tell us that he is, and what he  
is; the Son of God in our Nature, or God-  
Man, Mediator. They acquaint us with his  
infinite Perfections and Condescensions as  
God; with his spotless Obedience, and exqui-  
site Sufferings as Man, and with the Excel-  
lence, Dignity, and Acceptableness of his  
Obs-

**SERM. VII.** Obedience and Sufferings as *God-Man*. They shew us how fit and capable he was to deal with God for Men, and accordingly, how he was set up from Everlasting, and his Delights were with the Sons of Men; how he loved the Church, and gave himself for it, became their Substitute, stood in their Law-place, answered for them, and redeemed them by his Blood from among Men. And they shew us how desirable it is, that God should deal with us, according to the Interest Christ has with him for Men. They paint him out in the Dolors of his Cross, and in the Glories of his Crown; in his humbled, and in his exalted State and Characters. They represent him as the great Prophet of the Church, to instruct them by his Word and Spirit; as their only High Priest, first to offer an Atonement, and then to make Intercession in the Virtue of that Atonement for them; and as their Sovereign Lord and King, to set up his Throne and Kingdom in their Hearts, to oblige them by his Laws, to rule them by his Word and Spirit, to subdue them as a willing People to himself, to deliver them from, to defend them against, and to give them Victory over, Sin, Satan, and the World, through himself that loved them. And they speak of him as the great and awful Judge of the whole World at the last Day. They set him forth as an All-sufficient, suitable, faithful, and willing, Saviour, engaged, and ready to compassionate and help the Distressed, and to save all Sorts and Degrees of Sinners, that come unto God by him, and they shew us the Way of Salvation alone through him. They describe him as the Surety of the New Covenant, and as a vital Head to quicken our Souls to the Life of Grace



Grace and Holiness in this World, and our <sup>SERM. VII.</sup> Souls and Bodies to an immortal Life of Glory in the next. They speak of him as the Author, the Object, and the Lord of our Faith, Repentance, Love, Worship and Obedience; and as the only Person in whom either we or any of our Services can find Acceptance with an offended, righteous, Sovereign. They encourage our Approaches, and open a Way for free Access to the Father with humble Boldness, and for the most delightful Communion with him through this only Mediator. They assure us of his steady Love and Care to all his chosen, redeemed, and called, that none shall pluck them out of his Hands, and that he is able to keep them from falling, and to present them faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy.

IN a Word, they represent him as *All* in Col. 3. 11. *All*: As all in all our Salvation; for he is made of God to us Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption: As all in all our <sup>1 Cor. 1.</sup> Gifts and Graces, which are bestowed upon us according to the Measure of the Gift of Christ. Eph. 4. 7. As all in all the Officers and Ordinances of the Church, both as to their Institution, Fitness, and Efficacy; for he ascended that he <sup>Ver. 10.</sup> might fill all Things: As all in all our spiritual Life, Privileges, Acts and Comforts; for Christ liveth in us, and the Life we live in the Flesh Gal. 2. 20. is by the Faith of the Son of God: As all in all our Assistance and Acceptance; for we are accepted in the Beloved, and can do all Things through <sup>Phil. 4. 13.</sup> Christ which strengtheneth us: And as all in all our Hopes for Eternity; for Christ in us is <sup>Col. 1. 27.</sup> our Hope of Glory; and when Christ who is our <sup>3. 4.</sup> Life shall appear, then shall we also appear with him in Glory.



SERM. VII.

THE whole Gospel, in all the Editions of it, is a Display of the personal, and mediatorial Glory of Christ; of what he is in himself, of what he is or will be to us, and of what we are or ought to be to him. It gives us a delightful Prospect of what he is in his Actings with God for sinful Creatures, and in his Actings from God toward them. And it represents him as the grand Medium of all the Reconciliation, and friendly Correspondence, that is renewed between God and them. All its Declarations, Invitations, and Promises, have this sweet and engaging Aspect toward Christ; and therefore, as the Gospel is frequently called the *Gospel of Christ*, so the Preaching of it is several Times call'd the *preaching Christ*. All its Lines, one way or other, center in him, and derive their Beauty and Power from him. Hence 'twas the Apostle *1 Cor. 2. 3.* *stiles Determination, not to know any Thing — save Jesus Christ and him crucified.*

'TWOULD be almost endless to recite the Crowds of Passages that speak this, and such like Language, concerning Christ: I shall therefore only add a few plain Hints, that the Scriptures both of the *Old* and *New Testament* are a Revelation of Christ to us.

I. THE *Old Testament* is a Revelation of Christ.

THE first Promise evidently spoke of him, *Gen. 3. 15.* as that *Seed of the Woman*, that should bruise the *Serpent's Head*. Many other Discoveries, Promises, and Prophecies, were gradually given of him, with increasing Light to *Abraham*, *Isaac*, *Jacob*, *Moses*, *David*, and the later Prophets; and by them to the whole Church of *Israel*. They set him out as a suffering and triumphing Saviour, as the *Seed of Abraham*,  
in

in whom all Nations should be blessed; as the SERM. VII.  
 great Shilo, to whom the Gathering of the People  
 should be; as a Prophet like unto Moses; as a  
 King in Zion; as a Priest upon his Throne; as a  
 Child born, and Son given to us; and yet, as the  
 Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and Prince of  
 Peace; as Immanuel, God with us; as the  
 Messiah; and as the Lord our Righteousness,  
 with many other strong and lively Descripti-  
 ons of him. Hence the Apostle Peter ap-  
 peal'd to them, saying, To him give all the Acts 10.  
 Prophets Witness, that through his Name, who so-  
 ever believeth in him, shall receive Remission of  
 Sins. And our blessed Lord, beginning at Mo-  
 ses, and so on through all the Prophets, expound-  
 ed in all the Scriptures the Things concerning him-  
 self. And speaking of the whole Body of the  
 Old Testament, under the usual Distinction  
 of the Law, Moses, the Psalms, and the Pro-  
 phets, he reminded his Disciples, that all Things  
 written in them concerning him must be fulfilled.  
 Which shews, that Notices of Christ were  
 scattered throughout those sacred Records.

THERE are not only many Declarations,  
 Promises, and Prophecies, in the Old Testa-  
 ment concerning Christ; but likewise nume-  
 rous Types and Figures of him, which now ap-  
 pear with the greatest Advantage under the  
 additional Discoveries of New Testament  
 Light. I would just hint a few of these.

SOME of the ancient Types of Christ, ac-  
 cording to the usual Distinction, were personal,  
 and others real. Among the personal, Adam was  
 a Type of Christ's publick Headship to all his  
 Seed, being therein the Figure of him that was  
 to come. Moses was a Type of Christ as a Pro-  
 phet, Aaron as a Priest, and David as a King,  
 Joseph and David were Types of his Sufferings

**SERM. VII.** and Exaltation: *Jonah* of his Death, Burial, and Resurrection on the Third Day: *Enoch* and *Elijah* of his Ascension into Heaven. The High Priest's entering into the most Holy Place with the Blood of the Sacrifices, and bearing the Names of the Children of *Israel* on his Breast-plate, prefigur'd Christ's Entrance into Heaven, with the Virtue of his own Blood, to appear in the Presence of God for us. And *Melchisedec* typified the Eternity and Dignity of the Person, Priesthood and Kingdom, of the Messiah, who was to come.

AMONG the *real* Types, *Noah's Ark* may be reckon'd a Type of Salvation by Christ; and the Rainbow Covenant, of the Covenant of Grace established in him. *The Ram in the Thicket* offer'd up in the stead of *Isaac*, the *Paschal Lamb*, the *Sin-Offerings* and the *Burnt-Offerings* on the great Day of Atonement, together with all other *Propitiatory Sacrifices* under the Law, were Types of Christ's Substitution in the room and stead of Sinners, and of his Suffering for their Sins, the Just for the Unjust, that he might bring them to God. The Acceptance of *Abel's Offering*, and the Fire that probably came down from Heaven to consume his Sacrifice, as it certainly did some other Sacrifices under the Law, appear to be Types of divine Justice's seizing on Christ, the Substitute, instead of the obnoxious Offender, and of God's accepting his Offering for such. The *Tabernacle* and *Temple*, and the *Tokens* of the Divine Presence in them, were Types of the Human Nature of Christ, of God's dwelling in him, and in his Church through him, and becoming conversible with sinful Men by him. Many other Particulars may be observed in the Ceremonial Law, that were in some respect or  
other

other Typical of Christ; of what was to be <sup>SERM. VII.</sup> fulfilled in him, or of the exalted Privileges of the Gospel, that were to be brought in by him. Hence the Apostle speaking of the *Priests that offer'd Gifts according to the Law*, says, Heb. 8. 4, *they serve unto the Example and Shadow of heavenly*

*Things*: Speaking of several Institutions of that Law, he says they were a *Shadow of Things* Col. 2. 17. *to come, but the Body, or Substance, is of Christ*:

And speaking of the Ceremonial Law in general, he calls it a *Shadow of good Things to come*. Heb. 10. 1.

Thus not only the plainer Declarations and Prophecies, but the Law likewise was a Gal. 3. 24. *School-Master to bring the Jews to Christ, that they might be justify'd by Faith*. If this is understood of the moral Law, as some Passages in the Context seem to warrant, particularly when 'tis said, *the Law was added because of Transgression*, and as many as are of the *Works of the Law* — 10. *are under the Curse*, and *Christ hath redeemed us* — 13. *from the Curse of the Law*: This Law was eventually a School-Master to bring them to Christ, as it shew'd them their Defects, their Guilt and Danger, and their Need of a better Righteousness than their own; and so made way for their hearty Entertainment of the Gospel Discovery of Christ, *who is the End of the Law* Rom. 10. *for Righteousness to every one that believes*. Or, if

we understand it of the Ceremonial Law, which the Apostle very much speaks of in this Epistle to the *Galatians*, it was a School-Master to bring them to Christ, as it pointed them to him, that they might not rest in *Mosaick Rites*, but might seek all Salvation in the promised Messiah, who was prefigur'd by them, and in whom they were to have their full Accomplishment. And I am inclin'd to think, for these Reasons that offer for both, that the Apostle



**SERMON VII.** intends the whole *religious Law* of the *Jews*, both *Moral* and *Ceremonial*, in this *Passage* to the *Galatians*; and that taking that whole *Constitution* together, it was a *School-Master* to bring them to *Christ*, that they might be justified by *Faith* in him. Accordingly, in the *Epistle* to the *Romans*, when the *Apostle* had prov'd, that

Rom. 3. 20. by the *Deeds* of the *Law* shall no *Flesh* be justified in *God's* sight; for by the *Law*, that is, the *moral*

Ver. 21. *Law*, is the *Knowledge* of *Sin*; he adds, *But now*, that is, by the clearer *Dispensation* of the *Gospel*, the *Righteousness* of *God*, by which we must be justified without the *Law*, that is, without our own personal *Performance* of its *Deeds* for that *End*, is manifested; being witnessed by the *Law* in its various *Types*, as well as in other *Ways*; and by the *Prophets*, who testified of *Christ*. Thus the whole *religious Law* of the *Jews*, and the *Prophets*, some way or other, refer unto *Christ*; they show our need of the *Gospel Way* of *Justification* by *Faith* in him, and, though for the most part, in an *obscurer Manner*, yet in *Reality*, lead us to him. Hence,

2. THE *New Testament* is still a *fuller* and *clearer Revelation* of *Christ*.

2 Cor. 3. 9. THIS is a *Ministration* that exceeds in *Glory*.

Ver. 14. Here the *Old Testament Vail* is taken off: All its *Clouds* are scatter'd; its *Shadows* fly away, and every *Thing* concerning *Christ* is represented in great *Plainness* of *Speech*; and we with

— 12. open *Face* behold as in a *Glass* the *Glory* of the *Lord*.

— 18. *New Testament Facts* answer, and cast a *Light* upon, *Old Testament Promises and Prophecies*. The *antient Types and Figures* of *Christ*, and of *spiritual Blessings*, are here set forth as having their complete *Accomplishment* in and by him. And the *dark Hints* which the *Old Testament* gave

gave of him, are set before us in a *stronger*, SERM. VII. more *extensive*, more *familiar*, and *striking* Light in the *New*.

ALL the Writings of the *Evangelists* are a copious History of Christ, and consist of plain Narratives of his Divine and Human Natures, of his Incarnation, Life, Doctrines, Miracles, Sufferings, and Obedience unto Death, when *he gave himself a Ransom for many*: And they trace him through Death to his Resurrection from the Dead; his Conduct for *Forty Days* afterwards among his Disciples on Earth, and his Ascension into Heaven; according to the Assurances he had given them, that he would go and prepare a Place for them, send the Comforter to them, and come again to receive them to himself, that where he is, there they might be also.

THE Book of the *Acts* carries on the Account of Christ's Ascension, and Exaltation at the Father's Right Hand; of his pouring down his Spirit on the Disciples according to his Promise, and of his Continuance in Heaven till he shall come again to judge the World at the last Day. This noble History draws out to a considerable Length the Apostles Labours and Sufferings for Christ; how they went about *preaching the Lord Jesus*, as the great Saviour that was risen from the Dead, and how remarkably he was with them, to assist, and own, and preserve them in his Work, and to succeed the Word of his Grace.

THE *Epistles* are full of Christ, they all speak of him, and give us abundance of additional Light concerning him. They unfold the wondrous Counsels of God's Wisdom and Grace in him, and open the Way of Salvati-

*SERM. VII.* on with the greatest Evidence for *Jews* and *Gentiles* alone through him. They proclaim the Glory of the Dispensation into which he has brought us; they give us a large Detail of the rich Benefits he has procured for true Believers, and of the multiplied Bonds he has laid upon them. They maintain his sole Authority in the Church, and by that Authority they settle the Worship and Order of his House. They expatiate upon the Faith, Love, Worship, and Obedience, that are to be paid to him, and to the Father through him; and they brighten our Prospects of Heaven, and of the Resurrection of the Body, in Conformity to Christ's glorious Body, that we may be with him for ever.

AND the *Revelations* display his exalted Characters, his Dominion over all Things, his Care of his Church, and the wonderful Revolutions he since that Time has made, is still making, and will continue to make in the World on their behalf, till Anti-Christ, and all his implacable Enemies, shall be utterly destroyed, and till at length, the last Day's Glories shall shine, in all their Lustres of Knowledge, Love, Peace, Purity, and holy Triumph on Earth; which shall be perfected by the Power and Grace of Christ, in still more grand Felicities to all Eternity in Heaven. This completes the whole Testimony of God concerning Christ, or of Christ concerning himself. And he is so much spoken of by all the sacred Writers, that we may say

*Joh. 5. 46.* of them, as he did of *Moses*, *If we believe them, we shall believe him, for they wrote of him.*

WE might add, that,

III. THE Scripture is the Word of Christ, as he works, and carries on his Interest by it.

IT is the Word of the Kingdom, whereby he Mat. 13. sets it up, supports and carries it on in the 19. World. And it is the Rod of his Strength sent Psal. 110. forth out of Zion, whereby he rules in the midst<sup>2, 3.</sup> of his Enemies, and makes his People willing in the Day of his Power.

BUT as I have prevented my self in several Thoughts, that might have been offer'd on this Head, by what has been already said in a foregoing Sermon about the standing Use of the Scriptures, I shall, to avoid Coincidence, wave any farther Discourse upon it here.

THUS I have considered in what Respects the Scripture may be call'd the Word of Christ. And shall only add two or three Reflections.

# REFLECTIONS.

I. Is the Scripture the Word of Christ? Reflect. I. This bespeaks him to be God.

THE Scriptures are not the Word of Men, though delivered by Men; but are in Truth the Word of God. They usually bear that Title, to denote their Divine Authority; and our Text calls them the Word of Christ, to enjoin our most religious Regards to them. All Scripture is given by Inspiration of God; he only is the Author of them; and yet we have heard that Christ inspired his Servants to preach and write them by his Spirit, and that he is the Author of them. 'Tis only God that doth or can effectually work by his Word to the Salvation of them that believe; and our Faith stands not in the Wisdom of Men, but in the Power of God by his Word: And yet Christ is Heb. 12. 2. the



**SER. VII.** *the Author and Finisher of our Faith.* We should therefore receive the Word upon the Credit of his Divine Authority, and subject our Consciences to it as his Word, and to him, according to it, as the God that gave it, and enjoins it upon us.

**Reflect. 2.** 2. Is it the Word of Christ as it discovers him to us? *Let us search after Christ in the Scripture.*

**Joh. 5. 39.** *Search the Scriptures — for they are they which testify of me.* And how much more should we search them with this View, now the New Testament has added so many important and glorious Things concerning him? We should prize the Scripture most of all, as it is a Revelation of Christ to us. That blessed Name that *Augustine* could not find in *Cicero's* Writings, which therefore lost their Relish with him, bespangles and adorns the Scriptures, as the Stars do the Firmament. We should therefore consult them, read, hear and meditate, upon them, that we may find as much as may be of Christ there, and may get acquainted with him in all that can be known concerning him. Let us search for farther Discoveries of him in all the Glories of his Person, Undertakings, and Performances, as our great Redeemer, Head, and Surety, than we have yet observed: And let us search out all the endearing Relations he bears to fallen Creatures of *Adam's* Race, and his Suitableness, in all Things, to our own Condition; that we may be thoroughly instructed in the whole Method of Salvation by him, may be securely interested in him, and may act toward him, and for him, according to his Word.

ALL the Knowledge of the Scriptures SEEM. VII.  
 themselves will be of no saving Advantage to  
 you, unless you know Christ, and the Way  
 to eternal Life through him. They are in-  
 deed *able to make you wise to Salvation*, but 'tis Joh. 14. 6.  
 only through Faith in Christ Jesus that they are & 17. 3.  
 so. He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life,  
 no Man comes to the Father but by him, and  
 therefore 'tis eternal Life to know him. He is  
 the Pearl of great Price, that 'tis worth search-  
 ing the Scriptures for; and yet, alas! how many  
 are there that read their Bibles, and take lit-  
 tle or no Notice of what they meet with of  
 Christ there; but are as ignorant of him, and  
 leave him out of their Religion, as if the Scrip-  
 ture spoke nothing of him!

3. Is it the Word of Christ by which he Reflect. 3.  
 works and carries on his Interest? *Let it be*  
*our great Concern to feel his Power by it.*

It should not satisfy us that we believe it as  
 we ought, on rational Grounds, to be the Word  
 of Christ; but we should earnestly desire to feel,  
 by happy Experience of its Power on our  
 Hearts, that it is so; that it is an enlighten-  
 ing, quickening, strengthening, sanctifying,  
 healing, and comforting Word to us; that it  
 comes to us not in Word only, but also in Power, 1 Thes. 1.  
 and in the Holy Ghost, and in much Assurance, so 5, 6, 9.  
 as to have like Effects on us as it had on the  
 Thessalonians, who became Followers of the Apo-  
 stles, and of the Lord; and turned to God, from  
 Idols, to serve the living and true God; that 'tis  
 the Power of God to the Salvation of our own Rom. 1.  
 Souls; and, that it is mighty through him, to 16.  
 the pulling down of strong Holds, casting down 2 Cor. 10.  
 Imaginations, or corrupt Reasonings, and eve- 4, 5.  
 ry high Thing that exalteth it self against the  
 Know-

**SERM. VII.** *Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ.*

**SINNERS** should have this Point in View, that the Word of Christ may be effectual, by the Power of his Spirit upon their Hearts, to awaken, convince, and convert them, and to become a Word of saving Faith in their Souls, to bring them home to the Lord Jesus. With this Aim and Hope they should read and hear, reflect upon, and pray over, the Word of Christ, that they may be effectually drawn to him, and taught to profit by it unto Life everlasting through him.

**AND** Believers should not satisfy themselves with what Experience they have already had of the Power of Christ with his Word; but should be daily pressing after farther  
 1 Pet. 2. 2. *Enlargements by it, As new born Babes, desiring the sincere Milk of the Word, that they may grow thereby.* We should be concern'd to live and abide under its Power, to the Increase of our Light and Grace, Comfort and Holiness, and to the regulating our Hearts and Lives, our Principles, Acts and Ends, in all our Dealings with God and Men. How flat, cold, and dull, are our Spirits, under the Word of Christ? And how tasteless and ineffectual is it to us, when it comes in Word only! But, O, how delightful and profitable to read or hear it, when 'tis accompanied with his Presence, when he owns and applies it, opens its Glory before us, and speaks to our Hearts by it! Happy Souls, whose Experience helps their Faith, in the Word of Christ!

**MAY** we not, at such Seasons, say as the Disciples did, when Christ joined them in their  
 Way

Way to Emmaus, Did not our Hearts burn with <sup>SERM.VII.</sup>  
 in us, while he opened to us the Scriptures? We <sup>Luk. 24.</sup>  
 then feel what we believe, and our spiritual  
 Sensations, as well as our Faith, tell us 'tis  
 the Light, the Strength, and the Rejoicing  
 of our Hearts. We then find it sweeter to our <sup>Psal. 19.</sup>  
 Taste than Honey or the Honey-Comb; and esteem <sup>10.</sup>  
 it more than all Riches.



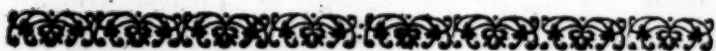
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SER.





## SERMON VIII.



COL. iii. 16.

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in  
you —*

SER. VIII.



WE have already seen, That the Scripture may be called the *Word of Christ*, as he is the *Author* and grand *Subject* of it; and as he owns it, and carries on his *Work and Interest* by it. We are now to consider,

Secondly, THE *Entertainment* we ought to give this *Word of Christ*. *Let it dwell in you.*

THE Expression is *metaphorical*, and taken from such external Things as we can't but be

## *The Word of Christ to dwell in us.* 107

acquainted with. Every one has some Notions of what it is to dwell in a Place, or with another Person: And therefore, in Condescension to the weak, imbodied State of our Minds, and to the most familiar Way we have of conceiving Things, the Holy Ghost uses an Expression, taken from a known Case, to represent the Interest the Word of Christ should have in us, and the Regard we ought to have to it. *Let it dwell in you*; that is, in each and every one of you; for this Epistle was writ to the Community of the Church, *To the Saints, Col. 1. 2. and faithful Brethren in Christ at Colosse*; and so speaks to all Christians as concern'd in this Duty. "Let not the Word of Christ be as a  
"Stranger to you; don't put it away from  
"you, or shut it out of your Hearts, but let  
"it dwell in you as a welcome, settled, Inhabitant, for your daily Converse with it, and  
"religious Treatment of it." The Apostle John uses a like Expression, when he speaks of the *Truth that dwells in us, and shall be with us for ever.*

IN the Prosecution of this Point I shall attempt two Things; the last of which I design as an Improvement of the first. I shall,

I. ENQUIRE into the Sense of this Exhortation; or, *What it is for the Word of Christ to dwell in us.*

II. OFFER some practical Considerations against taking up with bare Notions of it, and to enforce the Exhortation to let it dwell in us.

I. ENQUIRE into the Sense of this Exhortation; or, *What it is for the Word of Christ to dwell in us.*

THIS

SER. VIII.

**W** **THIS** certainly imports something more than a bare reading, or hearing his Word, or taking up some Sentiments of the Doctrines it contains. Though these Things are supposed as necessary in order to its Dwelling in us; yet the Metaphor is too strong to be confin'd to these. It denotes the most practical, fixed, and affectionate Regards to it, that we may make a proper Use of it, and reap suitable Advantage by it. Therefore,

I. 'Tis to admit or receive it into our Hearts, that it may take Possession of us.

**THE** Heart is the principal Part of the Prov. 23. 7. Man: And, as a Man thinks in his Heart, so is he. Accordingly, when the Scripture speaks of the Place, that spiritual Things have, or ought to have, in us, or of our Actings toward them, it represents our Hearts as principally concerned in them. Thus, what at one Time Joh. 6. 56. is call'd Christ's dwelling in us, is at another Eph. 3. 17. called his dwelling in our Hearts. And, what Rom. 10. is often called a Man's believing in Christ, is at 9, 10. & other Times called his believing with his Heart, Acts 8. 37. and with all his Heart. And what in our Text is called the Word of Christ dwelling in us, is elsewhere expressed by its being in our Rom. 10. Hearts. The Word is nigh thee, even in thy 8. Mouth, to profess it, and in thy Heart to believe Psal. 119. and entertain it. David speaks of biding God's 11. Word in his Heart. Our blessed Lord, in the Parable of the Sower, interprets the good Ground Luk. 8. 15. on which the Seed fell, to be the good and honest Heart, that receives the Word and keeps it. And our Apostle, in the Conclusion of that Verse, which our Text begins, speaks of a religious Use of the Word, in singing with Grace in our Hearts to the Lord. The Word of Christ must have Entrance into our Hearts, they must be

be opened to receive it, as *Lydia's* was. It <sup>SER. VIII.</sup> hereby takes Possession, and begins its Habitation in us; and we hereby receive it to dwell in us.

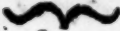
Now this receiving the Word of Christ into our Hearts is, according to the Scripture Account of it, with *Faith, Love, and Meekness.*

(1.) *It is received into the Heart with Faith.*

UNBELIEF shuts the Heart against the Word of Christ; it puts away from us, and rejects the Counsel of God against our selves, and Luk. 7. 30. so renders it ineffectual to us. Hence 'tis said of some to whom the Gospel was preach'd, that the Word preach'd did not profit them, not being Heb. 4. 2. mixed with Faith in them that heard it. But Faith opens the Heart to the Word, and gives it free Admission. It receives it as the Word of God, as bearing Impressions of his Authority, and as demanding a conscientious Subjection to it. Thus, when the *Thessalonians* 1 Thes. 2. received the Word of God, which they heard of the Apostles, they received it not as the Word of Men, but (as it is in Truth) the Word of God, which effectually work'd also in them that believ'd.

WE are to receive it by Faith as God's Word, that speaks to us, and concerns us, with relation to our tenderest and eternal Interests; as the Word, according to which all our Expectations and Supplies must be from him, and all our Actings must be toward him; as the Word, by which we must stand or fall to our own Master, must be try'd and judged, and be acquitted, or cast in Judgment at the last Day; and as the Word, according to which, as 'tis entertained or rejected, we must be inexpressibly Happy or Miserable for ever. We are likewise, by Faith, to apply it



**SER. VIII.**  to our own Souls, and to receive it as the Ground and Rule of our own personal Conduct; that according to the Discoveries God therein makes of himself, and of the Way of Salvation alone through Christ, we as lost and guilty Sinners may believe in him for Remission of Sins unto everlasting Life; and by Virtue of our Union with him, and his dwelling in us by Faith, may bring forth Fruit to God.

(2.) *HIS Word is received into the Heart with Love.*

A PERSON may know the Truths of Christ in his Word, may be convinced of them, and give an Assent to them; and yet his Heart may disrelish and oppose them; he may not chuse them or approve of them, or like to be or act according to them: Yea, his Heart may be full of Enmity and carnal Prejudices against them. His Pride of Heart before God, his unbridled Appetites, his Love of Sin and sensual Pleasures, and his Fondness for the Honours and Emoluments of this World, may bear down all Convictions, and make him wish, that what he can't but own is true, was all a Fable. What a just De-

**Rom. 8. 7.** scription has the Apostle given of this! *The carnal Mind is Enmity against God; for it is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be.*

**Chap. 1. 18.** He speaks of some, *that held the Truth in Unrighteousness.* They stifled and suppressed the Dictates and Convictions of their own Consciences; they put a Force upon them, and added the Tyrant over them, and would not suffer them to restrain their vicious Inclinations.

**2 Thes. 2. 10.** And he speaks of others, *that received not the Love of the Truth, that they might be saved.* Or, to use our Lord's own Expressions, which are

a clear Explication of this Matter, *Men love* SER. VIII.  
*Darkness rather than Light, because their Deeds*  
*are evil; for every one that doth Evil, hateth the* Joh. 3.19,  
*Light, neither cometh to the Light, lest his Deeds* 20.  
*should be reprov'd.*

AND may I not appeal to some of your Consciences, Whether this is not the Case with you? Whether you don't disrelish the good Word of God, especially such Parts of it as lie most contrary to your natural Inclinations, your high Opinion of your selves, your Constitution Sins, or your temporal Interests and Esteem among Men? Whether you don't sometimes labour to stifle and evade Convictions of such opposite Truths, and are not secretly pleased when you can make any shift to silence them, or to put them out of your Minds? And whether, if you could but get rid of the tormenting Fears of Punishment, you would not readily abandon all religious Regards to every part of that Word? Surely Christ speaks to such in the Scripture now, as he did to some of old, that *would not come to him* Joh. 5.40;  
*that they might have Life; I know you, that ye have* 42, 44.  
*not the Love of God in you. And, How can ye be-*  
*lieve, which receive Honour one of another, and*  
*seek not the Honour that comes from God only?*

BUT when the Word of Christ is received into the Heart, 'tis with a cordial Love to it. The Soul sees an engaging Excellence, and Suitableness in it, and approves of it as a Revelation every way worthy of God to make, and every way fit and advantageous for it self to receive. It esteems the Word of Christ as a bright Display of God's Perfections, Counsels, Will and Works; as a Fund of the most sublime, holy, useful, and necessary Discoveries, and as a Charter of all valuable Privile-

**SER. VIII.** ges inforcing all reasonable Obligations. Such Majesty, Wisdom, Purity, and Goodness, shine through the Scripture, as make Believers in love with it, and raise a holy Ardor in their Desires to entertain it, to possess its spiritual Blessings, and to be form'd according to its exalted Genius. They, like *David*, *Psal. 119. 128.* esteem it concerning all Things to be right. They *Ver. 111.* take God's Testimonies as an Heritage for ever; for they are the rejoicing of their Hearts. And they *Ver. 72.* reckon them better, than Thousands of Gold and Silver. They bid the Word of Christ welcome, and receive it gladly, as a Summary of the best Tidings that ever reach'd their Ears. *Acts 2. 41.* And the Nobility, or generous Temper of their Heaven-born Souls, lies in a Disposition to receive it with all Readiness of Mind, searching the Scriptures daily, in Confidence of their Truth and Goodness, that they may embrace every Thing they find supported by them.

(3.) THE Word of Christ is received into the Heart with Meekness.

THIS is spoken of by the Apostle *James*, *Jam. 1. 21.* Receive with Meekness the ingrafted Word, which is able to save your Souls. If it becomes effectual to Salvation, it must be grafted or planted in our Hearts; and if 'tis planted there, it must be by a meek Reception of it. This Meekness respects an Humbleness of Mind, and Teachableness of Spirit, in opposition to a contentious, opinionative, and unyielding Temper; and to that superfluity of Naughtiness, that appears in the Wrath of Man, which the Apostle, in the foregoing Words, had caution'd against. Accordingly, to receive the Word with Meekness, is to receive it in the Sincerity of our Souls, that we may learn the Truth as it is in Jesus, for  
our

our own saving Advantage ; that we may obtain the *End of the Commandment*, which is *Charity*, out of a pure Heart and of a good Conscience, and of Faith unfeigned ; and may not swerve from these, and turn aside to vain Jangling. 'Tis to receive it as Persons sensible of our own Dark-ness, and of our need of Divine Instruction ; as Persons heartily desirous to take all our religious Sentiments from the Scripture, and not to bring our own pre-conceived Opinions to the Scripture, that we may seek to support them by unnatural forced Constructions of what we find there ; and, 'tis to receive it as Persons ready and determined, by the Grace of God, to entertain whatever we plainly discern he has revealed in his Word ; whether it suits our former Temper, or Notions, or whether we are able to account for it, or to understand how it can be, or no.

FOR want of this Meekness Christ crucified<sup>1</sup> was to the Jews a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness. The Prejudices of the one, and the false, though confident Reason of the other, lay against the Doctrine of his Cross ; and therefore they rejected it as Contradiction and Nonsense. But where true Meekness prevails, it corrects the wrong Bias of the Soul, sets up the Wisdom of God above our own, makes us willing to learn from him, as far as our Capacities can go, and to receive his Testimony barely on his own Authority, when they can go no further ; and it naturally suggests to us, that, for Reasons worthy of himself, he may demand our firm Belief of some transcendent Truths, which are not capable of being brought down to our low Ideas, and which it is not fit for us to pry into, any farther than he has given us Light in his Word

SER. VIII.  
I Tim. I.  
5. 6.



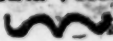
SER. VIII. about them. This Temper of Mind is so necessary when we deal in sacred Things, that we can't too much guard against the dangerous  
 1 Tim. 3. Vice of *being lifted up with Pride, lest we fall in-*  
 6. *to the Condemnation of the Devil, sharing in his Punishment as well as in his Sin. Hence, the*

Psal. 131. Language of this Meekness is, *Lord, my Heart*  
 1. *is not haughty ——— neither do I exercise my self in great Matters, or in Things too high for me.*

Job 34. 32. And, *that which I see not, teach thou me. It bows the Soul to the awful Sovereignty, the infinite Wisdom, and the supreme Authority of God, without lifting up it self against him, or charging him foolishly, because it can't search him out to Perfection, or fathom his Depths, or understand all his Ways.*

THIS creaturely Temper has a very great Decency in it, and most of all becomes the Inhabitants of our fallen, gloomy World. And God has sufficiently shown his Pleasure in it by his kind Regards, and special Promises of Instruction to Persons of such a Spirit. He sent  
 Isa. 61. 1. Christ to *preach good Tidings to the Meek. The*  
 Psal. 25. 9. *Meek will he guide in Judgment, and the*  
 Joh. 17. 17. *Meek will he teach his way. And, if any Man, says Christ, will do his Will, is honestly desirous to know it, that he may either practise it, or behave correspondent to it, he shall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God.*

AND when this Doctrine takes full Possession of the Heart, all Dispositions of a contrary Nature are bore down before it; for it is  
 2 Cor 10. *Mighty through God to the pulling down of strong*  
 4. 5. *Holds, casting down Imaginations, and every high Thing that exalteth it self against the Knowledge of God, and bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ. It is powerful to demolish the Forts or Ramparts* [*αἱ πόλεις καὶ ἀμύνοντες*  
*ὅχλους.*

δυσμενείαν] the Perverseness, and resolute SER. VIII.  
 Obstinacy of the Temper and Will, that   
 stands against the glorious Revelation God  
 has made of himself in the Gospel. It casts  
 down all the Reasonings [λογισμὸς] that in  
 Conjunction with every Height of Mind  
 [καὶ πᾶν ὕψωμα] set up themselves against it.  
 And it captivates every pre-conceived Notion,  
 or Device [πᾶν νόημα] into a Subjection to the  
 Authority of Christ.

HOWEVER, we are not to apprehend that,  
 when we receive the Word of Christ with this  
 Meekness, we lose our rational Faculties, or  
 cease to exercise them about the Things of  
 God; for we then begin to think more justly,  
 and to reason in a way more becoming our  
 selves than we ever did before. The Meek-  
 ness with which we receive it, makes us very  
 modest in our Reasonings upon Things above  
 our reach. It awakens just Apprehensions,  
 that whatever God says must be more certain,  
 because he says it, than our fallible and deprav-  
 ed Reasonings can be, in their Opposition  
 against it; especially in Things of a sublime  
 and intricate Nature. It gives us a godly Jeal-  
 ously over the natural and accessory Prejudices  
 of our distemper'd Minds, and sets us upon  
 our Guard, lest we be imposed upon, misled,  
 and abused by them, in divine Concerns. It  
 makes us heartily desirous to lay aside all car-  
 nal Reasonings, and corrupt Affections, as  
 Persons conscious of their malignant Powers to  
 blind the Mind. It disposes us to suspect that  
 we are mistaken, when our Judgment of  
 Things seems to lie in direct Contradiction to  
 the plain Word of God. And it lays the Soul  
 open to Conviction, Instruction, Correction,  
 and Settlement by that Word, as to whatever.

**SER. VIII.** it perceives God speaks in it; whatever were its own Thoughts of those Things before. And who, that understands Human Nature, and is well acquainted especially with himself, can refuse to give into this Way of thinking about the deep Things of God? And what Laws in Reasoning about such Things can be more just, than to exercise our Faculties with these Cautions, and with this Subjection to the Author of them? This is so far from putting a Bar upon sincere and impartial Enquiries, that it refers us up to the highest Reason, and removes the Obstructions that would prevent our being determined by it.

BUT far be it from us to think, that this Meekness should carry us to embrace any Doctrines, under pretence of a divine Revelation, that are indubitable Contradictions to any sure Principles of *right* Reason; or, that we can certainly see are plainly repugnant to it, with respect to Things within our own Sphere and Capacities, and of which our Reason (notwithstanding its present State of Weakness and Depravation) is a competent and proper Judge. Much less are such Doctrines to be admitted, when all their Foundation lies in some ambiguous Terms; and when their Tendency is directly opposite to some important avowed Designs of that Revelation which they are pretended to be a Part of.

THIS is the Case with respect to the monstrously absurd Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*. The Pretence, that 'tis a Doctrine of Divine Revelation, is set up only on a few Passages of Scripture taken in a *literal* Sense, which any unbiass'd Mind may easily see, from the Nature of Things, and from the Phraseology of the Scripture it self in like Cases, were design'd



sign'd to be taken in a *figurative* Sense. The SER. VIII.  
Tendency of that Doctrine is directly contrary to the great Design of that Revelation it is pretended to be a part of, which is to secure a spiritual Worship of the only true God against all Kinds of Idolatry. And we are as sure, as that *Two* and *Two* make *Four*, that 'tis a direct Contradiction both to our Senses and Reason, in their best Situation, and to the common Senses, and unprejudiced Reason of all Mankind, about the *inseparable* and *essential* Properties of *Body* in general, and the specific *distinguishing* Properties of *Flesh* and *Blood*, and *Bread* and *Wine* in particular. And these are Things within our own Sphere, Things that we have the most clear and distinct Ideas of, Things of which we are proper competent Judges, and Things that Mankind hath as familiar Acquaintance with, from daily Observation and Experience, as they can have with any Thing whatsoever.

BUT I think nothing of this Nature can be said, and that the very Reverse of it all may be said, with respect to the most sublime, incomprehensible Doctrines of the Scripture; such as the *Prescience*, and *Omnipresence* of God, the *one undivided Godhead* of the Father, Son and Spirit, the *Incarnation* of the Son, the *Operations* of the Spirit, some of the *most awful and inexplicable* Parts of the Divine *Conduct* and *Government*, particularly with respect to *Sin* and *Punishment*, and the *Resurrection* of every *Man's own Body*; with other Points of the like high Strain. These stand so plainly asserted in the Revelation God has given us, and are inculcated so frequently in a great Variety of Terms, that are apparently designed to be taken in a proper Sense, and illu-



**SECT. VIII.** illustrated by others, that are as evidently to be taken in a metaphorical Sense; that the grand Reason why any reject some, or all of these, is only because they think them contrary to their Reason. These Doctrines are vastly important, with respect to the great Design of the Scripture, and directly tend to advance it; in many obvious Instances, which I can't now stand to enumerate. And these relate to Things so far out of our Reach, so much above our natural Ideas, and our ordinary Ways of thinking; at such a distant Remove from all the Observation and Experience we have Opportunity for, and from the stated Relations, Capacities, and Methods of Procedure among Men, that it seems to be no great Commendation of his Modesty, who should pretend to be a proper, competent Judge of them. And therefore they are to be received with *Meekness*, according to Scripture Evidence about them, without forcing our Reason beyond its own Sphere, to set up its lower Light against them.

THE Scripture's opening a Scene of such sublime Prospects before us, is a Contrivance worthy of God, to cure the most original Corruption of our Nature, which began in a vain Affectation of being equal in Knowledge to his infinite Self. And our meek Assent to such exalted Doctrines upon the sole Authority of the Revealer, as far as we find them in God's Word, becomes a noble Virtue, and a strictly religious Act, in meer Submission to God himself. But where is the Virtue, or the Religion, of believing no more than we are forced to assent to upon the Evidence that arises to us from the Nature of the Things themselves? To object  
against

against any Thing that God has reveal'd; and <sup>SER. VIII.</sup> to refuse an Assent to it, only because we can't see the Connection of Ideas, or understand how it is possible that such Things should be, is so far from the *Meekness* demanded of us in receiving the Word of Christ, that it seems to be a querulous Dissatisfaction of Mind, either that God is not *less incomprehensible*, than 'tis possible for him, or that we are not *more capable*, than 'tis possible for us to be.

THUS to let the Word of Christ dwell in us, is to *receive it into our Hearts with Faith, Love, and Meekness*. I shall be shorter in the rest.

2. 'TIS to *live under its Power and Influence*.

WHEN 'tis received into the Heart, in the Manner that has been describ'd, it is inthron'd in order to farther Power and Efficacy there. It dwells in us with a Divine Authority, and prevailing Influence. It dwells in us as a Sovereign to rule us, that we may *obey it from the Heart*, as a Principle to animate us, *thy Word hath quickened me*; and as an incorruptible Seed, that *brings forth Fruit, in some an Hundred, in some Sixty, and in some Thirty fold*. It dwells in us in such a discernable Manner, that we feel its Impressions which that Word assures us are made by the blessed Spirit. It *enlightens the Eyes, and rejoices the Heart*. It acquaints us with our selves, and discovers Christ to us, and is the Means by which we *hear and learn of the Father to go unto him*. It warns us of Evil, and is *hid in the Heart, that we may not sin against God*. And it is as a *Lamp unto our Feet, and a Light unto our Path*. <sup>Rom. 6.</sup> <sup>Psal. 119.</sup> <sup>50.</sup> <sup>Mat. 13. 8.</sup> <sup>Psal. 19. 8.</sup> <sup>Joh. 6. 45.</sup> <sup>Psal. 19.</sup> <sup>11. & 119.</sup> <sup>11, 105.</sup>

**SER. VIII.** IN a Word, it dwells in us to direct and move, and command our Souls in all their Dealings with God in Christ for eternal Life, and in all our Walk before him in our way to it; and to be the Means, by which he conveys all Grace to us, and spirits us up to all Obedience to him.

3. 'Tis to be familiarly conversant with it.

ITS dwelling in us bespeaks an intimate Acquaintance, and frequent Converse with it.

**Dent. 6.** Hence said God to *Israel*, *These Words which I*  
**6, 7.** *command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently to thy Children, and shalt talk of them, when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* Accordingly, 'tis the Description of

**Psal. 1. 2.** a good Man, that *his Delight is in the Law of the Lord, and in his Law doth he meditate Day and Night.* And this Character was exemplified in

**Psal. 119.** Holy David, who said, *O, how love I thy Law!*  
**97, 98.** 'Tis my Meditation all the Day. And thy Com-

*mandments* — are ever with me. Our Thoughts should be frequently taken up with the Word of Christ, searching into the meaning of it, meditating and reflecting upon it, and labouring to treasure it up in our Hearts and Memories. We should familiarize it to our selves, and make it our Companion wherever we go. And when the Business, or Diversions of this Life, have carry'd our Thoughts another way, it should be their Propension to return to it again, upon the first leisure that may offer, and upon every sudden and remarkable Emergency that may require Assistance from it. Hence,



4. 'TIS to have it abiding in us.

WE are to keep it with the same Faith, Love, and Meekness, with which we at first receiv'd it: We are to remain under its Power and Influence, and to keep up our familiar Acquaintance with it all our Days.

ITS Dwelling in us naturally suggests this to us; it is a Word that imports *Residence* with a continued Abode. Christ's Word should live with us wherever we are, and whatever we do, on the Lord's Days, and on other Days; through every Period of Life, and when we come to die. Accordingly the Apostle John speaks of the Word of God abiding in us. *I have written to you, young Men, because ye are strong, and the Word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked One.* No Temptations of this World, no Power or Artifice of the Devil, and no contrary Working of their own remaining Corruptions, had been able to root this Word of God out of their Hearts; but it kept its Place there, and maintain'd its Efficacy in them. In like manner, Christ speaking of the good and honest Heart, in distinction from unprofitable Hearers, says, that *having heard the Word, it keeps it, and brings forth Fruit with Patience.* The Apostle Peter speaking of true Believers, says they are *born again, not of corruptible Seed, but of incorruptible, by the Word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever.* And the Psalmist said of himself, *I will never forget thy Precepts: And thy Testimonies have I taken as an Heritage for ever; for they are the Rejoicing of my Heart.*

THUS we have considered the Sense of this Exhortation, to let the Word of Christ dwell in us.



SER. VIII.

*W*ITNESS. IT may now be time to turn in and *examine* our selves, Whether the Word of Christ dwells in us, or no?

HAVE we given it this Entertainment; or, have we contented our selves with empty Notions of it? Have we admitted it to take Possession of our Hearts; or, have we put it away from us? Have we received it as the Word of God; or treated it as if 'twas only the Word of Man? Have we heartily prized it as an excellent and agreeable Guest; or have we over looked it with a negligent, careless Eye? Have we consulted it with a docile, tractable Temper; or with an opinionative, unbending Heart? Have we felt its Power; or been unimpress'd by it? Have we made it our Companion; or been Strangers to it? And has it Abode with us; or have we only now and then paid some little regard to it, when we could not tell how to avoid it?

THESE are plain Questions, which, for the most part, Conscience is able to answer: Questions, which 'tis concerned to answer with the utmost Impartiality; which it *must* answer one Time or other to our own inexpressible Happiness, or Grief; and a true Answer to which will help us to discern, whether, and how far, we have hitherto really profited by the Word of Christ, and how we ought to deal with it for Time to come.

IF thou knowest not what Answer to make to these Questions, don't give up the Enquiry; but pursue the Examination seriously and closely, between God and thy own Soul; and earnestly beg of him to cast such Light and Influence on thy Mind, that thou mayest neither flatter, nor be unjust to thy self, nor remain undetermined in thy Judgment about thy self.

If

If Conscience says the Word of Christ has not yet dwelt in thee; let that Conscience have free leave to speak all the humbling and awakening Reproof that such a Verdict calls for; and let its Suggestions be seriously attended to, that it may hereafter witness better Things concerning thee. If it says it doth dwell in thee; be thankful for what thou hast received, and labour after still farther Possession and Improvement of it. But if Conscience will not concern it self about any Enquiries of this Nature, 'tis a fearful Sign, that whatever Profession thou makest of knowing God, *thy Mind and Conscience is defiled*; yea, that thy Conscience is become as indisposed for Sensation, as Flesh that *is seared with an hot Iron*. Tit. i. 15. But however thou mayst slight all Thoughts of this kind now, that stupid Conscience must awake again, O that it may not be too late! when thou wilt certainly find it to be of the most tremendous Consequence for the Word of Christ not to dwell in thee. Something of this may possibly appear with some Conviction to such as shall please to attend to the next Discourse.

5 DE60



SER.



## SERMON IX.



COL. iii. 16.

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in  
you —*

SER. IX.



SHALL NOW,

II. OFFER *some practical Considerations against taking up with bare Notions of the Word, and to inforce the Exhortation, to let it dwell in us. And here,*

I. 'TIS *a mean unworthy Thing, to take up with bare Notions of the Word of Christ. It is unworthy of a Man, and much more of one that bears the Name of a Christian.*

THE Discoveries that are made in the Word of Christ are of the most excellent Kind, to  
endear

endear him to us, to establish his Authority over us, to display the Glory of God before us, to guide our Actions towards him, and towards all Men, to mend our Hearts and Lives, and to make us truly Happy here and for ever. And shall we satisfy our selves with bare Notions of such a Word as this, without possessing it unto these rich Advantages? Shall we content our selves to use this beneficial Word only for Speculation and Amusement, without any practical Acquaintance with its Power and Goodness to order and influence our Hearts and Ways, that they may be directed and assisted in Pursuits of the Glory of God, the Good of others, and our own Salvation? Shall we prefer the Pleasures of Sin, and the flattering Allurements of a vain, empty, and deceiving World, before the elevating Pleasures, and solid Advantages, the Word of Christ presents to our View? O, what a Reproach is this upon our Understandings, and upon our Taste! What a Disgrace to immortal Souls! How doth it sink their Dignity, and make them viler than the Beasts that perish, who have no such noble Sentiments to restrain their sensitive Appetites, or to lead them to sublimer Pleasures! We may think we hear God saying to us in this Case, *Remember this, and shew your selves Men: Bring it again to mind, O ye Transgressors!* Isa. 46. 8.

THE Revelation Christ has made of himself, and of the Will of God by him, in his Word, is a glorious condescending Effect of his Wisdom and Grace to sinful Creatures, and is enjoined upon us by his divine Authority. And, what an unworthy Reproach doth it cast upon him? What a Reflection is it on his infinite Wisdom? What an Affront to his

Q. What is the Answer? Au-



**SER. IX.** Authority? And, what an ungrateful Contempt of the Riches of his Grace, for any of us to slight it, and lay it aside, as not worth regarding? Here again it may be said to such, *Dent. 32. They have corrupted themselves; their Spot is not the Spot of his Children: They are a perverse and crooked Generation. Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish People and unwise?*

HIS Word is the Means which he has appointed to work by, to enlighten, renew, sanctify, comfort, and save lost and perishing Sinners. And, shall any of us have Notions of this Word, and refuse to be guided, reformed, comforted, and saved by it? What is this, but to lose all sense of real Worth, and of Things that are truly Excellent, and to abandon our selves to all that is vile and miserable, and to take pleasure in it? The proper Tendency of the Gospel is to exalt and improve Human Nature; to make us the *Excellent of the Earth*, to restore us to such divine Beauties, as resemble God and Angels, and to the truest Greatness and Honour, both in the Temper of our Minds, and in the noble Relations it would advance us to. And shall we be so mean, so base, spirited, as to hear what it says of these, and have no Ambition for them, no Emotions of Soul after them? O, whither is Human Nature sunk! What is become of our Notions of Honour! And, what means the Christian Name, that we assume, if we can be so low and sordid in our Temper, as to look with a careless Eye on all this! *as mod. W. said.*

Is therefore, you would not act so much beneath the Dignity of the superior Rank God has given you in the Creation; so much below the Christian Character, by which you would be known; so unworthy of the Authority,

Wil-

Wisdom, and Grace of Christ; to reproach-  
 fully to all the rational Principles of your  
 own Beings; so utterly unbecoming the glori-  
 ous Tendency of the Gospel, and with such a  
 mean Neglect of all that is really Good, and  
 Great, and Excellent, *Let the Word of Christ  
 dwell in you.* Hence,

2. To take up with bare Notions of it, is  
*a self-condemning Thing.*

IF we have Notions of this Word, of the  
 plentiful and engaging Discoveries God has  
 made of his Grace to us, and of our solemn  
 reasonable Obligations to him, and don't let  
 it dwell in us, that we may entertain it, give  
 up our selves to its Light and Power, and act  
 according to it; our own Consciences must,  
 and one Time or other will, severely reproach  
 and condemn us for it. They will condemn us  
 for hating our Light, and acting contrary to  
 it. They will condemn us for refusing that  
 Subjection to God, which we know we ought  
 to pay him, and can't but own 'tis just and  
 equal that we should pay him. They will con-  
 demn us for rejecting, or slighting the Grace,  
 we see he freely offers and proposes through  
 Christ to us. They will condemn us for not  
 being, or doing, what we know 'tis our great-  
 est Duty and Interest to be and do, and  
 what we have the most promising Grounds of  
 Hope, that by his Grace we might be and do,  
 according to his Word. And, they will con-  
 demn us for the unnatural Violence we offer'd  
 to God and our selves, to the tender and au-  
 thoritative Calls of his Grace, to the strivings  
 of his Spirit, and to the strong Dictates of our  
 own enlightened Minds, only that we might  
 indulge our basely beloved Sins, and persist  
 in our senseless Rebellions against him.

SER. IX.

WHAT the Apostle says of the *self-condemning* Part the Heathens acted against the Light of Nature, may, with much stronger Force and Emphasis, be said of those, that have Notions of the Word of Christ, and disregard it; *They knowing the Judgment of God, that they which commit such Things are worthy of Death, not only do the same, but have Pleasure in them that do them.* And accordingly, when in the next Chapter he speaks of those, that had the Light of God's Word, he expostulates with them in a pungent Strain upon this Principle of Self-Condemnation. *Behold, thou art called a Jew, and reatest in the Law, and makest thy Boast of God, and knowest his Will, and approvest the Things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law — which hast the Form of Knowledge, and of the Truth in the Law. Thou therefore, which teachest another, teachest thou not thy self? Thou that preachest a Man should not steal, dost thou steal? Thou that sayest a Man should not commit Adultery, dost thou commit Adultery? Thou that abhorrest Idols, dost thou commit Sacrilege? Thou that makest thy Boast of the Law, through breaking the Law dishonourest thou God?*

Rom. 1.  
32.Chap. 2.  
17, 18,  
20—23

AND what a foolish and distressing Thing will it be found at last, for Sinners to act such a self-condemning Part! With what Confusion, Agony, and Horror, will they be forced to subscribe to the Justice of the final Sentence, when it passes upon them! With what Keenness will every Reflection on this Course of *self-condemning* Behaviour, point every Arrow of divine Vengeance, drive it into their Consciences, inflame every Wound, and aggravate every part of their insupportable Sorrows! How will those Consciences rend and tear, lash and



and sting, and reproach them for it, when there will be no Remedy! This will be as the *Worm that never dies*, but is ever gnawing the tenderest Vitals of the immortal Soul.

If therefore you would act a righteous Part toward your selves, toward the sober Demands of your own Minds, as well as toward God and Christ, according to his Word: If you would not lie under the terrible Scourge of an accusing Conscience, while you live, nor feel its aking Throbs and Anguish when you come to die, and for ever afterwards: If you would act according to Light and Evidence, according to what your own Consciences (did you but give them leave to reflect) must tell you is every way best, and fittest for you; *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.* Hence,

3. To take up with bare Notions of it, is to pervert its gracious Design, and render it useless to you.

THE grand Design of this Revelation, is not to stock the Head with a Set of fine Notions, but to convey its Light into the Heart, that it may become impressive and transforming there. The Understanding, or Mind, is the leading Faculty of our Souls, by which all the rest are, or ought to be, moved and regulated; and the Light God sheds by his Word in our Minds, is not set up there for mere Speculation, but for practical Influence, to make us better as well as wiser, and to engage us unto Action, correspondent to the Sentiments conveyed to us by his Word: And unless the Word of Christ has this Effect upon us, its main Design is defeated as to us, and all our Furniture for Wisdom makes us only so much the more capable of becoming the most egregious Fools. Hence says the Apo-



SER. IX.

Jam. 1.

23, 24.

He James, If any Man be a Hearer of the Word, and not a Doer, he is like unto a Man beholding his natural Face in a Glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of Man he was; and so he had as good never have seen himself at all.

1 Tim. 3.

16. &amp; 6.3.

THE Word of Christ contains the great Mystery of Godliness. 'Tis the Truth, and the Doctrine which is according to Godliness. It is appointed to restore Godliness to a degenerate World; and the great Things it promiseth

2 Pet. 1.3.

are such as pertain to Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue. It shews us the Way of returning to God, that by Faith in the Lord Jesus we may approach him with Acceptance, and find Favour in his sight; and, that we may treat him with all sacred Regards as the only Lord of our Faith and Obedience, as our chief Good and highest End, till we arrive at a full Enjoyment of him. It is sent to us as

Acts 13.

26.

Rom. 16.

26.

the Word of Salvation, and is made known amongst us for the Obedience of Faith. It proposes Christ as a Saviour from Sin, as well as from the Wrath to come, that we may seek all Salvation, Wisdom, Righteousness, Sanctification, and Redemption, in him; and that we may receive him by Faith, and trust in him, as our only Foundation of Pardon, Acceptance, Peace, Holiness, and Hope of eternal Life; and that

Col. 2.6,7.

as we receive Christ Jesus the Lord, so we may walk in him; rooted and built up in him, and established in the Faith, as we have been taught, abounding therein with Thanksgiving. All the Declarations of the Grace of God in Christ to us; all the Connections which the Scripture makes between Grace and Duty, and between Faith, Holiness, and Happiness; all its

its

its Prescriptions of Duty, all its Invitations, Exhortations, Examples, Expostulations, and Commands; in a Word, the whole Frame and Tenor of it shew, that Heart-work, Heart-impressions, and a Heart-change from Sin and Self, to God, and Christ, and Holiness, that we might Glorify him here, and be for ever Happy with him hereafter, are its great Design in its Publication to us.

BUT if we take up with Notions of it, and it don't dwell in us: If it has not Entrance into our Hearts, and is not received with Faith, Love, and Meekness; If we don't fall under its Power and Influence, are not familiarly conversant with it, and it don't abide with us; all this gracious Design of the Word of Christ is subverted as to us, and we receive *2 Cor. 6. 1.* *this Grace of God in vain.* And, O, how sad and melancholy a Reflection must it be, to think that such a precious Word of Christ, such a glorious Discovery, so full of Light and Grace, should be lost upon us, that we should miss of the great Salvation it proposes to us, and that we should have no more real Advantage by it at last, than if we had never known any Thing of it! But, if it dwells in us, all the Benefit designed by it will be ours. It will fill us with Light and Grace, Peace and Joy, Holiness and Happiness; it will quicken, strengthen, and support us, while we live, and when we come to die; it will make us wiser and better, more excellent, useful, and comfortable Creatures here, and for ever glorious and blessed hereafter. If therefore, you would not fall short of the merciful and glorious Design of the Gospel, but desire to be Partakers of all its Benefits, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.*

SER. IX.

4. To take up with bare Notions of it is exceeding Dangerous.

THERE can't but be the utmost Danger in treating Christ's Word at such a Rate, as perverts its gracious Design, and renders it  
 Heb. 2. 3. useless to us: For, *How shall we escape, if we neglect so great Salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was afterwards confirmed to us by them that heard him?* No other Way of Salvation is possible to Sinners, but that which is made known by Jesus Christ in  
 Acts 4. 12. the Gospel; for there is Salvation in no other: *For there is no other Name under Heaven given among Men whereby we must be saved.* And if we have only Notions about Christ, and the Way of Salvation through him, our Hearts, in the mean Time, rejecting him, and lying out from that way, it is impossible that we should obtain Salvation by all the Knowledge  
 Mat. 7. we have of him. Hence says he, *Not every one*  
 21, 22, 23. *that saith to me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he that doth the Will of my Father which is in Heaven. Many will say to me in that Day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy Name —? And then will I profess unto them I never knew you: Depart from me ye that work Iniquity.*

WHEN Persons take up with a bare speculative Acquaintance with the Word of Christ, they are in Danger of losing all Sense of its Worth and Excellence, of sinking by degrees into Scepticism about it, and Contempt of it, and of giving it up, upon every Temptation to quit or disown it, till at length  
 1 Tim. 1. they put away a good Conscience, and concerning  
 19. Faith make Shipwreck, and grow into an Indifference as to what they believe, either concerning Truth or Duty, any farther than it may



may comport with their worldly Views. And SER. IX.  
 this puts them into the most immediate Dan-  
 ger of being given up by the righteous Judg-  
 ment of God to *strong Delusions, that they should* 2 Thes. 2.  
*believe a Lie.* I tremble to think of the 10, 11, 12.  
 dreadful Effect, *that they all might be damn'd,*  
 judged or condemn'd [*iva xeiðōsi*] who, in  
 their Hearts *believed not the Truth*, so as to re-  
 ceive the Love of it, *but had pleasure in Unrigh-*  
*teousness.* O formidable Case! The worst,  
 the most dangerous, and incurable on this side  
 Hell! But, says our blessed Lord, *If any Man*  
*will do his Will*, if his Heart is ready to yield  
 the Obedience of Faith, *he shall know of the* Joh. 7. 17.  
*Doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak*  
*as a Man only, of my self.*

ON the other Hand, when any begin to  
 pride themselves in their Light; that they  
 have a distinguishing Judgment, exalted No-  
 tions, and know more than others, their vain  
 and foolish Hearts are apt to deceive them, as  
 if this was all that is necessary to their Salvati-  
 on; and they are in great danger of settling  
 there, and never getting any farther. But if  
 they are not solicitously concerned for the  
*Work of Faith with Power*, and for the Domini-  
 on of the Grace of God in their Hearts, that  
 they may *depart from all Iniquity*, and have their  
*Fruit unto Holiness*, whatever their pleasing  
 Speculations may be, their Danger of eternal  
 Destruction is as great, if they get no farther,  
 as if they had no Notions of the Word of  
 Christ at all: For if, says the Apostle, *I un-* 1 Cor. 13.  
*derstand all Mysteries, and all Knowledge — and* 2.  
*have no Charity, I am nothing.* They must be  
 number'd among those, *that bear Thorns and*  
*Briers, are rejected, and nigh unto Cursing, whose*  
*End is to be burn'd.* For, as this Word assures



Ser. IX. us on one Hand, that 'tis with the Heart, that  
 Rom. 10. *Man believes unto Righteousness*; so it likewise  
 10. assures us on the other, that the only availing  
 Gal. 5. 6. Thing in Christ Jesus, is such a Faith as works by  
 Heb. 12. Love; and that without Holiness no Man shall  
 14. see the Lord.

If then the Word of Christ don't dwell in you, whatever Sentiments you may have of it, your Danger is every Day growing upon you; and unless you find the Grace of the Lord Jesus exceeding, and abundant toward you with Faith and Love, working them in your Souls by his Word, your Ruin will be unavoidable. But if it is found to dwell in you, all is safe, and will be well for ever. As therefore you would avoid this most terrible of all Dangers, and be safe for Eternity, *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.* Hence,

5. CHRIST will judge you at the last Day, according to the Entertainment you give his Word now.

HOWEVER you may deceive your selves with bare Notions of Things here, he will take away your Refuge of Lies, and neither you nor your vain Confidences shall stand in Judgment. He sees through all your Disguises, through all the Unbelief, Carnality, and Perverseness of your Hearts. None of your Disrelish of his Word; none of your Disaffection or Disobedience to it; none of your shy, cold, and backward Temper concerning it; none of the Shifts you make to evade it, can be hid from him. And when he comes to judge the World in Righteousness, he'll judge the Secrets of your Hearts according to his Word. That very Word, which you secretly reject and despise in your Souls, and openly bid Defiance to in your Lives, not suffering it to dwell

dwelt in you, and govern you now, will stand SER. IX.  
 against you, and be the Rule according to  
 which Christ will judge you then. Hence said Joh. 12.  
 he, to those that believed on him, but were 42, 43, 48.  
 afraid to confess him, because they loved the  
 Praise of Men more than the Praise of God (which  
 shewed that their Faith was but a dead Notion)  
*He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my Words ;*  
*— the Word that I have spoken, the same shall*  
*judge him in the last Day.* And at another  
 Time, *Whoever shall be ashamed of me and my* Luk 9.26.  
*Words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when*  
*he shall come in his own Glory, and in his Father's,*  
*and of the Holy Angels.* All your Sin and Fol-  
 ly ; all your Sloth and Self-Indulgence, mean  
 Spiritedness, and Madness of Heart, where-  
 by you refused to entertain sincerely, and to  
 yield unreservedly, to the Power of his Word ;  
 all your secret Prejudices against the Things  
 made known to you by it ; all that Shame and  
 Fear of Men, and all those irregular Appe-  
 tites to this World, that kept it out of your  
 Hearts, and made you put it away from you,  
 will then be brought to Light, and exposed in  
 all their Guilt and Deformity before your  
 own Consciences, and before the whole  
 World. Christ will bring to light the hidden 1 Cor. 4. 5.  
 Things of Darkness, and will make manifest the  
 Counsels of your Hearts. And he will judge and  
 execute Judgment upon you as Evil-Doers, as  
 he speaks of Persons of your Character, and  
 Then shall ye begin to say, *We have eaten and drunk* Luk. 13.  
*in thy Presence, and thou hast taught in our Streets : 26, 27.*  
*But he shall say, I tell you, I know you not, whence*  
*you are, depart from me all ye Workers of Ini-*  
*quity.*

BUT if the Word of Christ dwells in you  
 here ; if you receive it into your Hearts with  
 Faith,

- SER. IX.** Faith, Love and Meekness, and live under the Power of it, Christ will own you as his
- Job. 10.** Sheep, that hear his Voice and follow him; he'll  
27. set you at his right Hand, and bid you welcome to the heavenly Mansions, saying, Come
- Mat. 25.** ye blessed of my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared  
34. for you from the Foundation of the World. Hence was the Apostle's humble Confidence,
- 2 Tim. 4.** when he drew near a dying Hour: I have  
7, 8. fought a good Fight, I have finished my Course, I have kept the Faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his appearing. And we are exhorted to abide in him, to continue in the Doctrine of Christ under his vital
- 1 Joh. 2.** Influence, that when he shall appear, we may have  
28. Confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his Coming.

How vastly different will Christ's Sentence in the Day of Judgment be, on those that contented themselves with empty Notions of his Word, and on those in whom it effectually dwells? What Agony and Confusion, Terror and Dismay will attend the one! And, what Rapture and Transport, exulting Joy and Triumph the other! If therefore you would stand in Judgment, and not be confounded with overwhelming Guilt and Sorrow there; if you would see the Smiles, and hear the absolving and felicitating Sentence, of the awful Judge before whom you and I must quickly appear, whether we will or no; *Let the Word of Christ dwell in you.* To conclude this Point,

6. To take up with bare Notions of it will turn them into the greatest Aggravations of your Guilt and Misery.



To sin against Light and Conviction is the most provoking Aggravation of Sin that can be: It is an outrageous Insult upon God, and bidding him Defiance. Such Sinners despise the exceeding Riches of his Grace, as if there was nothing engaging in them, and as if they were not worth enjoying. They trample on his Authority, as if it was not righteous: They affront his Wisdom, as if there was no Excellence in its Contrivances for his Glory and our Happiness: They dare his Justice, as if they scorned to fear it: They disgrace his Holiness, as if there was no Beauty in it: And they resolve to be their own Lords and Governors, as if the infinitely great God was not worthy to have Dominion over them. They set themselves against Christ and their own real Happiness: They take pains to shut their Eyes against their own Light; to smother all Remorse; to harden themselves against all Impressions; and to enervate all the Means of Grace, as if they were afraid of being converted and saved. And they go on in the evil way of their own Hearts, though they know that God abhors it, and condemns them in his Word for it. This is the desperate, audacious Course, that every Sinner takes, who has only Notions of the Word of Christ, and will not admit them into his Heart, to preside and govern there.

AND can there be any higher, any more incensing Aggravations of Guilt than this? Or, can any one's Destruction be more inexcusable, and more terribly cutting than theirs? That very Word which they know to be the Word of God, makes this the heaviest and foremost of all Condemnations, *That Light is come Joh. 3. 19. into the World, and Men loved Darknes rather than*



**SER. IX.** *than Light, because their Deeds were evil.* This makes their Guilt here, and their Misery hereafter, abundantly more loading and intolerable, than if they had never heard of Christ, or known any Thing of his Gospel. Hence said Christ to the *Pharisees*, that heard his Words, and were likewise acquainted with the Old Testament Scriptures that spake  
 Joh. 9.41. of him, *If ye were blind, as the Heathens are,*  
 Chap. 15. *ye should have no Sin of Infidelity, or no Sin*  
 22. *comparable to what you now have; but now ye say, We see; therefore your Sin remaineth, that is, without Excuse; ye have no Cloak for your Sin.* And in another Place he says to others, *Wo unto thee Chorazin, wo unto thee Bethsaida —*  
 Mat. 11. *And thou Capernaum, which art exalted to Hea-*  
 21, 23, 24. *ven, shalt be brought down to Hell; for if the mighty Works which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this Day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the Land of Sodom, in the Day of Judgment, than for thee.*

AND among those that fit under the Gospel, such as have a clear Knowledge of the Mind and Will of Christ in it, and yet shut him and his Word out of their Hearts, are more deeply criminal, and shall meet with severer Vengeance than others, that had not the like Knowledge with them. *That Servant*  
 Luk. 12, 41, 48. *which knew his Lord's Will, and prepared not, neither did according to his Will, shall be beaten with many Stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit Things worthy of Stripes, shall be beaten with few Stripes.* Then they that set at nought all his Counsel, and would none of his Reproof, shall find that he also will laugh at their Calamity, and will mock when their Fear cometh.

AND of all Sinners, their Guilt is the most flagrant and provoking, who have been most enlightened, and for a Season restrain'd from some gross Iniquities, by the Word of Christ; but have afterwards thrown off those Restraints, and dared to return to their former evil Ways, in direct Contradiction to their Light; and they will feel the sharpest Retributions of disdain'd Justice. For, if after they <sup>2 Pet. 2. 20, 21.</sup> have escaped the Pollutions of the World through the Knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter End is worse with them than the Beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy Commandment delivered unto them. And the Author to the He-<sup>Heb. 10. 26 — 30.</sup> brews tells us, that if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the Knowledge of the Truth, there remaineth no more, i. e. no other Sacrifice for Sin; but a fearful looking for of Judgment, and fiery indignation, that shall devour the Adversaries. He that despised Moses's Law died without Mercy — Of how much sorer Punishment shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the Blood of the Covenant where-with he (Christ, as I take it) was sanctified, an unholy Thing, and hath done despite to the Spirit of Grace? For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me; I will recompence, saith the Lord. And with what insupportable Weight with this Vengeance fall upon such a Sinner, when he shall be dragged before the impartial Bar of that All-seeing Judge, to receive the just Reward of all his exasperating Wickedness! With what trembling Confusion will his Mouth be stopped, against all Complaints of Unrighteousness in the worst Sentence that can pass

240 *Notions of the Word of Christ, &c.*

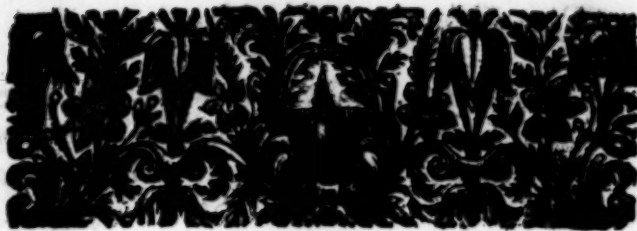
**SER. IX.** *pass upon him! With what glaring Evidence, and shocking Force, will his known and daring Iniquities witness against him! And how glorious, in fearful Praises, will God appear, when according to the many plain Warnings he had given him in this World, he shall condemn him to the hottest Flames of unquenchable Fire in the next!*

**Prov. 4. 18.** *BUT if the Word of Christ dwells in us, it will nourish us up to eternal Life: It will be Food for our Faith, Hope and Comfort, and will fill us with delightful Reflections and transporting Prospects, while we live on Earth, which shall all be perfected in the endless Joys of Heaven. For the Path of the Just is as the shining Light, that shineth more and more to the perfect Day. And the more it keeps Possession, and exerts its fruitful Powers in us, the more will our Prospects brighten as we pass on, and the more shall we be capacitated for, and enriched with, the illustrious Treasures of the heavenly Regions. For so an Entrance shall be ministred to us abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. If therefore you desire to escape this Misery, with the most fearful Aggravations that*

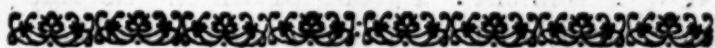
**2 Pet. 1. 11.** *can attend it; and, if you would go in and out, and find Pasture in Christ for your Souls here, and would triumph with him to the utmost Advantage in eternal Glory hereafter, let the Word of Christ dwell in you.*

**Joh. 10. 9.**

*THUS I have offer'd some Considerations against taking up with bare Notions of the Word of Christ, and to inforce the Exhortation, to let it dwell in us. The Lord apply it by his Spirit to your Hearts, that the Entrance of his Word may give you Light, and that it may abide in you to eternal Life.*



## SERMON X.



COL. iii. 16.

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in  
you richly, in all Wisdom.*



E now proceed to the last SER. X.  
Thing mentioned in our  
Text, which is,

*Thirdly, THE Manner, in  
which we should give the  
Word of Christ the Enter-  
tainment, that has been spoken of, and that  
is, richly, and in all Wisdom. It will be pro-  
per to consider these distinctly.*

I. *THE Word of Christ should dwell in us richly.*

THE Word translated *richly* [πλουσίως] sig-  
nifies, and is in other Places render'd, plenti-  
fully,



SER. X. *fully, or abundantly.* But I observe it is never used with regard to any Abundance in *trifling* or *useless Things*, much less in Things that are *unprofitable and injurious*; but always to an Abundance in such Things as are *good and excellent*, and make up the *Riches, Happiness* or *Advantage* of those, that are interested in them. And this the very *Notation* of the Word it self easily suggests to those that know any Thing of the *Greek Language*. As far as I find, it is used but in *Three* other Places in the New Testament: In one of which 'tis render'd *richly*, and in the other two *abundantly*; and in all those Places it respects an Abundance in such good Things as tend to enrich us. Thus in *1 Tim. 6. 17.* the Apostle speaks of God's giving us *richly* all Things to enjoy. In *Tit. 3. 6.* he is said to shed the Holy Ghost on us *abundantly* through Jesus Christ. And in *2 Pet. 1. 11.* an Entrance shall be minister'd *abundantly* into the everlasting Kingdom. The *First* of these Places refers to the abundant Riches of *Providence*; the *Second* to the abundant Riches of *Grace*; and, the *Third* to the abundant Riches of *Glory*.

ACCORDINGLY the Apostle's Exhortation in our Text, to let the Word of Christ dwell in us *richly*, seems to relate both to the *Abundance* and *Advantage* with which it should dwell in us. And that *Abundance* may be considered, both with respect to the *Word of Christ*, that *much* of it should dwell in us; and with regard to *us*, in whom it dwells, that it should *diffuse* it self through, and fill our *whole Souls*. So that according to this genuine Account of the Expression, we may take the Apostle's Sense to be this:  
 " Let a great Abundance of the Word of Christ  
 " dwell in your whole Souls, to enrich you  
 " with

"with all the Blessings contain'd in it." I SER. X.  
 would draw out this short summary View of  
 his Meaning in the Three following Steps.

I. LET a great Abundance of the Word of  
 Christ dwell in you.

WE should not satisfy our selves with a su-  
 perficial Acquaintance with it; but should  
 search into the Life and Spirit of the sacred  
 Text, and labour to penetrate into the deep  
 Things of God. We should dig for them more  
 than for hid Treasure, that we may have a  
 clear, judicious, and thorough View of them,  
 may see their Beauties, and know their Use  
 for the several great Purposes to which they  
 are adapted and designed.

THERE are many Passages of Scripture,  
 which we may think we understand very well,  
 and yet in reading them over and over again  
 with close Attention, and with humble Depen-  
 dence on the God of Wisdom, we may see  
 them in a stronger, more extensive, better,  
 and perhaps, very different Light, than we  
 ever did before. How many Instances of this  
 kind may the Experience of many furnish them  
 with, and that after they thought they had  
 made their last Judgment? Yea, when the  
 blessed Spirit shines in upon our Minds, new  
 Things may open before us, beyond what the  
 most enlarged Understandings of mortal Men  
 have yet attain'd to. There is a sufficient  
 Foundation in Prophecy to expect this in the  
 last Days, when the Earth shall be full of the Isa. 11. 9.  
 Knowledge of the Lord, as the Waters cover the  
 Sea; and when Knowledge shall be increased, Dan. 12. 4.  
 beyond what it ever was before. And the  
 nearer we draw to those happy Days, why may  
 not some stronger Glances of that Light dawn  
 upon us before-hand? However, upon the

SER. I.

**W** stated Principles of God's Word, we have abundant Encouragement to hope for divine Irradiations, when we enquire after Knowledge with humble, serious Meditation, Reading, Hearing, upright Aims, and fiducial Prayer. For the wise Man says, *If thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding; if thou seekest her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures: Then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God. For the Lord giveth Wisdom, out of his Mouth cometh Knowledge and Understanding.*

PROV. 2.  
3 — 6.

1 COR. 1.  
5.

NOR should we satisfy our selves with a narrow Compass of the Word of Christ, or that some few Parts of it dwell in us; but our earnest Desire should be, that *in every Thing we may be enriched by him* ——— *in all Knowledge.* According to the Capacities God has given us, and the Opportunities we have of conversing with it, it should be our care to get a plentiful Stock of all sorts of scriptural Truths, especially of such Truths, wherein this Glory of Christ, and of God in him, and our own Acceptance with him, Actings toward him, and holy Walk before him are most nearly concerned. We should be ready in *all* the Scriptures, that we may be able to turn to them on all Occasions, and make use of them for the several valuable Ends for which we need them.

How do some honest Christians lie under Darknes, others under Doubts and Discouragements, others under Fears, others under Mistakes in very important Truths and Duties, and others under great Coldness and Degeneracies in Heart and Life, through the Poverty of their Knowledge of the Word of Christ,

Christ, and the scanty Compass they take in their Use of it? They don't converse enough with it to settle them in the Faith and Hope of the Gospel on clear and solid Grounds, or to assist and promote their Aboundings in the Fruits of Righteousness. They often want Light to guide and encourage them in the way of Dealing with God in Christ for eternal Life, and to lead them into their Duty toward Men. This makes their Lives very uncomfortable to themselves, dishonourable to their God and Saviour, and of but little use to others.

BUT the Word of Christ should so plentifully dwell in us, that whatever Doctrines of moment are proposed to us, we may be able to adjust them by it; whatever spiritual Privileges and Enjoyments we want, we may find a suitable Promise for them; and whatever Graces we are called to exercise, or, whatever Duties toward God or others we are called to perform, we may be acquainted with suitable Precepts and Directions for them, and with suitable Inforcements and Encouragements to them. Such an Abundance of this Word should dwell in us, that we may have enough of it to guide us in all our Applications to God, and to regulate and assist all our Expectations from him; to enlighten our Darkness, to correct our dangerous Mistakes, to unbottom us from our selves, to lead us to Christ, that we may center on him for Righteousness and Strength, to fortify us against all Temptations, to restrain us from all known Sin, to guide, support, and comfort us under all Tribulations, to fix and influence all our Principles and Views, and to help us forward in every Branch of Godli-



SER. X. ness, Sobriety and Righteousness, throughout our Lives. Hence,

2. LET this great Abundance of the Word of Christ dwell *in your whole Souls.*

It dwells plentifully in us, when it fills our Minds and Hearts, and spreads its Light and Influence through all the Powers and Faculties of our Souls; when it takes full Possession of them, and operates effectually in them with the most diffusive Power. God's Word is spoken of as the *Food* of the Soul, and as the *Pasture* which the great Shepherd has prepared for his Sheep, for the Nourishment, Strength, Pleasure, and Growth of their spiritual Life. Christ gave it in Charge to his Servant *Peter*, to

Joh. 21. *feed his Sheep, and his Lambs.* And the Apostle Paul stirred up the Elders, or Pastors, to  
15, 16. *feed the Church of God, there called the Flock,*  
Acts 20. *which relates to their feeding them with the*  
28. *good Doctrines of his Word, as one obvious*  
*Sense of the Expression.* Accordingly, they

Psal. 100. *are called the Sheep of God's Pasture; and the*  
3. *Food with which he feeds them is his own*

1 Pet. 2. 2. *Word, called, the sincere Milk of the Word, that*  
*they might grow thereby.* Hence was his Pro-

Jer. 3. 15. *mise, to give them Pastors according to his Heart,*  
*who should feed them with Knowledge and Under-*

Chap. 15. *standing.* And, says the Prophet, *Thy Words*  
16. *were found, and I did eat them; and thy Word*  
*was unto me the Joy and Rejoicing of mine Heart.*

That therefore this Word may dwell richly in us, we should make full Meals of it, we should feed upon it, take it in, and digest it to the Satiety of our whole Souls. Our Appetites to it should bear a Proportion to our Capacities of receiving it, that they may all be filled with it, as God intimated to the Prophet *Ezekiel*

Ezek. 3. 3. *in one of his Visions, when he said unto him,*

Son

Son of Man, cause thy Belly to eat, and fill thy SER. X.  
Bowels with this Roll that I give thee. q. d.

“ Ponder my Word in thy Heart, meditate  
“ with the closest Attention upon it, and en-  
“ tertain it with all the Regard due to my  
“ Word, till thy Mind, thy Heart, and Af-  
“ fections, are deeply impress’d, and tho-  
“ roughly engaged by it.

THE Word of Christ should fill our *Under-standings* with the most useful and exalted Truths; with the most sublime Sentiments, just Reasonings, and solid Judgment about them: It should fill our *Wills* with the most excellent and substantial Goodness, should command their hearty Consent, and intirely subdue them to the Obedience of Christ: It should fill our *Affections* with pure and spiritual Pleasure, and should thoroughly possess all their Powers and Motions, to the Exclusion of every disorderly Passion and Appetite: It should fill our *Consciences* with Tenderness, Light, Faithfulness, and Peace, and should purify them from all Stupidity, rash Judgment and Deceit. And it should fill our *Memories* with a large Stock of its most important Doctrines, Precepts and Promises, under whatever Forms it has deliver’d them to us; that we may readily call them to mind for suitable Reflections and Improvements, as Occasions offer. Thus it should take complete Possession of our whole Souls, till it fills our *Treasures*; or, till all our Capacities of receiving PROV. 3.  
this Treasure are stored with it. 21.

AND this Abundance, with which the Scripture should dwell in us, should be to an over-flowing; that it may daily issue out at our Lips, and shed its glorious Virtues through our Lives. Hence the Apostle subjoins to our

SER. X. Text, Teaching and admonishing one another.  
 Mat. 12. And our great Lord hath said, *Out of the*  
 34. *Abundance of the Heart the Mouth speaketh.* It  
 is natural that it should do so, it ordinarily  
 will do so, and when it is well fill'd with pro-  
 per Materials, it ought to do so. This he fur-  
 Chap. 13. had spoken, *Therefore every Scribe, which is in-*  
 51, 52. *structed unto the Kingdom of Heaven, is like unto a*  
*Man that is an Householder, who brings forth out of*  
*his Treasure Things new and old.* And the Apo-  
 Jam. 3. 13. *stle James says, Who is a wise Man, and endued*  
*with Knowledge among you? Let him shew out of a*  
*good Conversation his Works with Meekness of*  
*Wisdom.* Hence,

3. LET this great Abundance of the Word  
 of Christ dwell in your whole Souls, to enrich  
 you with all the Blessings contain'd in it.

ALL the Admittance we give it into our  
 Hearts should be with this View, that we may  
 2 Pet. 1. 3. be enriched by it; that *Grace and Peace may be*  
*multiplied to us through the Knowledge of God, and*  
*of Jesus our Lord*; that we may get Possession of  
 all the Blessings of the Gospel, that can be  
 enjoyed in this Life, and may at length arrive  
 with Triumph to the promised Inheritance of  
 the Saints in Light.

THE Apostle speaks of the Gospel as a  
*Treasure*, which denotes an Amass of Riches,  
 2 Cor. 4. 7. when he says, *We have this Treasure in earthen*  
*Vessels.* And Christ speaking of the Gospel  
 Dispensation, under the Character of the  
 Mat. 13. *Kingdom of Heaven*, represents its great Bles-  
 44, 46. *sings as a Treasure hid in a Field, and as a Pearl*  
*of great Price.* In the Word of Christ we have  
 Rom. 11. Accounts of the *Riches of the Wisdom and Know-*  
 33. *ledge of God*; of the *Riches of his Goodness*; of  
 Chap. 2. 4. the

the exceeding Riches of his Grace; of the un-  
 searchable Riches of Christ, of the Riches of the  
 full Assurance of Understanding; of being rich in  
 Faith, and in good Works; of the Riches of  
 God's Glory, on the Vessels of Mercy; and of  
 the Riches of the Glory of his Inheritance in the  
 Saints.

SER. X.

Eph. 2. 7.

Chap. 3. 8.

Col. 2. 2.

Jam. 2. 5.

1 Tim. 6.

18.

Rom. 9.

23.

Eph. 1. 18.

ALL these Riches are freely open'd and  
 display'd before us, brought near, proposed,  
 and promised in the Gospel. These are Riches  
 infinitely preferable to all others, inexhausti-  
 ble, and unperishing, truly excellent and sa-  
 tisfying in their Nature, and everlasting in  
 their Duration, and are possessed by Myriads  
 at once, without dividing the Inheritance,  
 without Abatement or Deduction from any of  
 the Heirs, and without becoming cheap in  
 the Esteem of any, because others enjoy them  
 as plentifully as themselves. They are Riches  
 for the Entertainment and Happiness of the  
 noblest Part of the Man; Riches that inspire  
 us with a disinterested Generosity, that cure  
 Envy, that make us rejoice to have others  
 share in them with us, that don't defile or  
 perplex us in the Use of them, and that will  
 never disappoint our Hopes, never prove  
 empty or insipid in Enjoyment, never grow  
 stale nor rust upon our Hands, nor be liable to  
 be taken away from us. They are the greatest  
 Realities, by the Possession of which we *inherit*  
*Substance*. They exalt Human Nature, make  
 a glorious Change within us, add an intrinsic  
 Worth to our Souls themselves, and put all ex-  
 cellent Honour upon us, as well as afford us  
 the noblest Accommodations, and raise us in  
 the Esteem of all, whose Judgment deserves to  
 be valued. They will answer all our Wants,  
 give us full Content, and make us as com-  
 pletely



SER. X.

pletely Happy as we can wish to be, or be capable of being. Yea, they will immortalize our Happiness, and we shall never die away from them. Grace and Peace, Pardon of Sin, Justification and Adoption, Favour and Communion with God, Light and Strength, Love and Composure of Mind, Comfort and Holiness here, and eternal Glory in the full Enjoyment of the All-sufficient and Eternal God hereafter, make up these invaluable Riches. These should sit uppermost in our Hearts, above all Things in this World, should be often surveyed in our Minds, and should ingross our supreme Desires, Choice, and Pursuits, that we may be *rich toward God*.

THE more abundantly the Word of Christ dwells in us, the more these inestimable Riches will abound toward us; and therefore we should propose to get as full Possession of that Word in our Hearts as possible, that we may

Phil. 4. 19. *enjoy the Fulness of its Blessings, and that all our Wants may be supplied according to God's Riches in Glory by Jesus Christ.* And what can

Psal. 34. 2. *we desire more! Our Souls may then make their Boast in the Lord, and say with the Psal-*

Psal. 16. *mist, The Lord is the Portion of mine Inheritance,*  
5, 6. *and of my Cup. Thou maintainest my Lot. The Lines are fallen to me in pleasant Places; yea, I have a goodly Heritage.* If Christ's Word dwells richly in our Hearts, he and his Father will dwell there with it, that according to the

Eph. 3. *Riches of God's Glory in him, we may be filled*  
16—19. *with all the Fulness of God, as the Apostle pray-*

Joh. 14. *ed for the Ephesians.* Hence our Lord said to  
21, 23. *his Disciples, He that hath my Commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth me; and he that loveth me shall be loved of my Father, and I will love him, and will manifest my self to him;*  
and

— and we will come to him, and make our *Abode with him.* Accordingly the beloved Disciple says, *He that keepeth his Commandments* 1 Joh. 3. *dwelleth in him, and he in him.* And he that *abideth in the Doctrine of Christ, hath both the Father and the Son.* 24. Epist. 9. If God and Christ will dwell in our Hearts with their Word, this must be the best, the most desirable of all Riches, and in possessing them we possess an immense Portion, and an All-sufficiency of all good Things.

THUS we see what it is for the Word of Christ to *dwell richly in us.* Two Reflections shall conclude this Discourse.

### REFLECTIONS.

Reflect. 1. LET such as don't pay suitable *Regards to the Word of Christ, take just Reproof to themselves for it.* Reflect. 1.

IT ought to dwell richly in us; it is our great Duty and Advantage that it should do so. The Authority and Grace of God, the Excellence of that Word, and our own best Interests make high Demands for its dwelling plentifully in our whole Souls, to enrich us with all the Blessings contain'd in it. And if we would aim at the only valuable End of Life, in relation to this World and the next: If we would glorify God, and promote the Kingdom of our dear Redeemer, would consult our own truest Happiness, and the Good of others, we should labour that it may do so.

BUT how do we all *fail* in this important Duty! And what a *contradictory* Behaviour is there in many of us to it! If we seriously compare our selves with what we have heard, how reproveable, in one Degree or other, must we stand

**SER. X.** stand before our own Consciences for our shameful Defects herein! And, whether we admit the Reproof or no, it is certainly very speaking to several Sorts of Persons.

THIS Exhortation, as it has been explained, carries strong and close Reproof to those, that treat this Word of Christ in an unworthy and injurious Manner. It speaks Reproof to those that utterly reject its Divine Authority; to those that banter and deride it; to those that neglect and despise it; to those that seldom, if ever, care either to read or hear it, when 'tis brought nigh unto them; to those that have no hearty Desire to be acquainted with it; to those that prefer a diverting Story, or any Proposals for worldly Gain or Pleasure before it; and to those that satisfy themselves with bare fruitless Notions about it. Is not one or other of these the Case with some of you? Lay your Hands upon your Hearts, and let Conscience speak plainly, whether it is or no. If it is, you thereby, in Proportion to its prevalence, pour Contempt upon the Wisdom, Authority, and Grace of Christ in his Word; dishonour God, provoke his Wrath, despise your own Mercy, shut your selves out from all the saving Blessings of the Gospel, and heap up Wrath to your selves against the last Day. Have a care therefore, lest, notwithstanding the Promises of Rest, that are scatter'd about in the Word of Christ, any of you should fall short of it; and lest you lose all Share or Interest in the invaluable Riches of that Word, and perish for ever.


THIS likewise speaks Reproof to those of you, who have something of the Word of Christ dwelling in you, but don't admit it to dwell *richly* in you: Who satisfy your selves  
with

with a narrow, scanty Acquaintance with it, and seem only concern'd to get so much of it, as may just make shift to carry you to Heaven; but are not solicitous about the *Growth* and *Improvement* of your Knowledge of it, and its extensive Effects upon you, that you may be enlighten'd in, and impressed by the whole Counsel of God for your Direction, Comfort, prevailing Sanctity, heavenly Mindedness, and Usefulness in this World, and for your *abundant Entrance*, as well as for your safe Arrival to the Glory of the next. It is a loud Rebuke to those of you, that are contented with some Impressions of this Word upon your Hearts; but are not concern'd to have your whole Souls form'd according to it, and to live under the abounding Power of it. And it brings a touching Reproof to those of you, that take up with past Attainments, and are not pressing after farther Participations of this excellent Treasure, that you may be yet more and more possessed of it.

MY Brethren, *these Things ought not so to be*, Jam. 3.10. as the Apostle James says in another Case. This languid Temper is highly displeasing to God, and exceeding dangerous to your selves. 'Tis a greater Loss and Injury to your own Souls, a more indulging Liberty to your Corruptions, and a stronger Check upon your Comfort, and upon your Service, for the Glory of God, and the Good of others, than you are aware of. 'Tis a mean Spirit, utterly unworthy of the Grace you have received, and of the Obligations you are under, and altogether unsuitable to your Christian Character. This was not the Way of the great Apostle, whose Attainments were vastly beyond any that the best of us can pretend to.



# The Word of Christ to dwell

- SECT. X.  to. His Propension and Aims were for daily Improvements: He earnestly press'd after them, as his Choice, as his bounden Duty, and as the Method, which God had appointed for him to take, that he might not fail of the perfect State above, which he had in View; and he urged the like Progressiveness on other Believers, as they had him for an
- Phil. 3. 13, 14, 15. Example. Brethren, I count not my self to have apprehended; but ———— reaching forth to those Things which are before, I press toward the Mark, for the Prize of the high Calling of God in Christ Jesus. Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, or that are fully instructed in the Doctrine of Christ, be thus minded. Accordingly the Apo-
- 2 Pet. 1. 3, 4. stle Peter intimates that, as the divine Power has given us all Things, that pertain to Life and Godliness, through the Knowledge of him that hath called us to Glory and Virtue, whereby are given to us exceeding great and precious Promises, that by these we might be Partakers of a divine Nature;
- Ver. 5, 6, 7, 8. so, giving all Diligence, we should add to our Faith, Virtue — Knowledge — Temperance — Patience — Godliness — Brotherly Kindness — and Charity. For if these Things be in us and abound, they make us, that we shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Let us therefore, as this
- Chap. 3. 18. Apostle further exhorts, grow in Grace, and in the Knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Reflect. 2. LET this awaken our Apprehensions of the Need we have of the Spirit of Christ to make his Word dwell richly in us.

THE Concern of Duty, we have herein, don't supersede the Necessity of divine Grace to enable us for it; for that Duty can only be performed with desirable Success, under the super-

supernatural Operations of that Grace. And therefore, as we have Exhortations to it, suitable to our rational Natures, so we have gracious Promises of it, suitable to our fallen Circumstances. This intimates to us, that though we are to be active therein, yet 'tis to be under the influential Power of that God, who worketh in us; both to will and to do of his good Pleasure; and who, as the God of Peace, — through the Blood of the everlasting Covenant, makes us perfect in every good Work, to do his Will, working in us that which is well pleasing in his sight through Jesus Christ.

To get Christ's Word to dwell richly in us is an exceeding great and excellent Work. A Work above the Power of Nature in its lapsed State, contrary to our natural Darkness, Sloth, and Disrelish of the Things of God; and all our feeble Endeavours after it must be insufficient and vain, unless the Spirit of Christ opens our Minds and Hearts, and fills us plentifully with its Treasures. Hence, 'tis a part of God's Covenant to give his People an Heart to know him; to put his Law in their inward Parts, and write it in their Hearts; to give them a new Heart, and put a new Spirit within them; to take away the stony Heart, and give them an Heart of Flesh; and to put his Spirit within them, and cause them to walk in his Statutes, so that they shall keep his Judgments and do them. And David was so sensible of his Need of this, that he cried out, Open thou mine Eyes, that I may behold wondrous Things out of thy Law. Hide not thy Commandments from me; and create in me a clean Heart, O God, and renew a right Spirit within me; and I will run the Way of thy Commandments, when thou shalt enlarge my Heart. Teach me, O Lord, the Way of thy Statutes, and I shall

SER. XL

Phil. 2. 13.

Heb. 13.

20, 21.

Jer. 24. 7.

Ez. 31. 33.

Ezek. 36.

26, 27.

Psal. 119.

18, 19.

51. 10.

119.

32, 33.

36.

**SER. X.** *shall keep it to the End. Give me Understanding; and I shall keep thy Law; yea, I shall observe it with my whole Heart. Make me to go in the Path of thy Commandments, for therein do I delight. Encline my Heart to thy Testimonies; with abundance more of that strain.*

LET us therefore, in like manner, under a Sense of the like Want, search the Scripture, read, hear, and meditate upon it, with humble, earnest, Applications to God in Christ, for his Spirit to enlighten our Minds; that we may understand the Word of Christ; to open our Hearts, that we may receive and relish it; and to make us Partakers of its inestimable Riches. And where any Thing of this Work is done in us, let us still look up to this Spirit of Christ to make his Word dwell yet more and more richly in us; to enlarge our Views, that we may have a fuller, and more extensive Acquaintance with it; to bring and keep our whole Souls under the commanding Power and Influence of it; and to communicate to us an increasing Abundance of its inexhaustible Treasures.

THIS blessed Spirit himself is one part of the Riches of the Word of Christ. He has therein given Promises of this Blessing, and accompanies the Ministration of his Gospel with it. Hence was the Apostle's Appeal to  
 Gal. 3. 2. *the Galatians: Received ye the Spirit by the Works of the Law, or by the Hearing of Faith?*  
 And if we have the Blessing of this Spirit, by  
 Ver. 14. *the Blessing of Abraham's coming on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, that we might receive the Promise of the Spirit through Faith, that will bring in all the rest of the Riches of his Word to us; that will enlarge our Acquaintance with it; that will fill our Souls with its Efficacy,*

*richly in us.*

257

SER. X.

cacy, and make us *rich toward God*. Let us therefore strive together in our Prayers for our selves, and for one another; for the whole Church of Christ; and for a dark and degenerate World, that this Spirit may be plentifully pour'd down from on high, to make the Word of Christ dwell richly in us and them. And let this be our Encouragement in our Prayers, that our *heavenly Father* has promised to give *Luk. 11.*  
*the Holy Spirit to them that ask him.* 13.



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SER.






## SERMON XI.



C O L. iii. 16.

*Let the Word of Christ dwell in  
you richly in all Wisdom.*

SER. XI.

 E are considering the *Manner*, in which the Word of Christ should dwell in us, and that is *richly in all Wisdom*. This was cast into *Two Branches* for distinct Consideration. We have gone through the *First*, and the *Second* now lies before us, which is that,

II. THE *Word of Christ should dwell in us, in all Wisdom.*

WE may read the Scripture often, and have a great Stock of its Words and Phrases treasured up in our Memories, and not be made

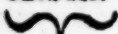
*The Word of Christ to dwell, &c.* 259

made truly wise by it. How many grown Persons are there, who, when Custom, Education, general Dictates of Conscience, or Injunctions of others put them upon reading their Bibles, do it like Children by rote, without considering what they read? Or, if they lodge any part of it in their Memories, 'tis as Children get their Catechisms, without understanding the Meaning of it. Or, if they understand the Sense of some Expressions taken by themselves, they don't know whether 'tis that Sense which the Holy Ghost intended by them. Or, if they have the true and proper Meaning of some Scriptures, they don't discern their most impressive Beauties, nor understand how to use or improve them to the Glory of God, or their own or others spiritual Advantage. All these, though some of them more than others, are dark in the midst of Light. *The Light shines in Darknes*, John 1. 5; *and the Darknes comprehends it not.*

BUT the Apostle would have the Word of Christ dwell in us *in all Wisdom*, that the sacred Treasure may not be lost upon us; but may shed its Light and Glory through, and around us; and that there may be a Correspondence of all excellent Wisdom in us, to that which shines in this Word. I would therefore, for a Conclusion of what I intended to offer upon this Text, and offer'd before on, *Rom. 15. 4.*

1<sup>st</sup>. CONSIDER *what is the Wisdom with which the Word of Christ should dwell in us.*  
And,

2<sup>dly</sup>. GIVE you some Directions to assist your Pursuits of that Wisdom. And the last of these may be regarded as a practical Application



## The Wisdom of

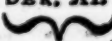
plication of the *first*, and of my *whole* Design.

1<sup>st</sup>. WE are to *consider what is the Wisdom with which the Word of Christ should dwell in us.*

WISDOM and Knowledge, in a loose and general way of speaking, are often used as Terms of the *same* Import. But in a more strict and accurate Sense, *Wisdom* is something *different* from *Knowledge*. In the widest Sense of Knowledge, Wisdom, strictly speaking, is one Branch or Species of it; but in the strictest Sense of both, they are different Kinds of intellectual Furniture. We may have Knowledge without Wisdom; but we can't have Wisdom without Knowledge. They are *both* Acts of the *Understanding*; but *Wisdom* is likewise an Act of the *Will*; hence we read of the Eph. I. II. *Counsel of God's Will*. Knowledge is our Perception of Things; but Wisdom is the Use and Improvement of that Perception to some valuable End. Knowledge assists Wisdom, as a Foundation for it to work upon, and Wisdom assists and improves Knowledge, as it directs to proper Methods to increase it, and to make it of real Advantage to us. Knowledge is *speculative*, and rests in general Notions of Truth; but Wisdom is *practical*, both in getting them, and in applying them for our own personal Conduct in all those Cases to which they may be apply'd.

ACCORDINGLY the Word of Christ's dwelling in us, *in all Wisdom*, seems principally to relate to *two* Things, (1.) Wisdom to *search out* the right Meaning of his Word. And, (2.) Wisdom to *improve it* to the practical Purposes for which it is designed.

(1.) THE

(I.) THE Word<sup>l</sup> of Christ should dwell in SER. XL  
us in all Wisdom, to search out the right Meaning  
of it. 

ONE great Design of the Apostle in this Epistle, was to guard the *Colossians* against the false Teachers among them, who corrupted the Simplicity of the Gospel of Christ, mixed *Jewish*, if not *Pagan*, Doctrines with it, and by sophistical Glosses perverted its main Design, and tarnished all its Glory. Beware, Col. 2. 3, says he, lest any Man spoil you through Philosophy and vain Deceit, after the Traditions of Men, after the Rudiments of the World, and not after Christ. In Opposition therefore to these, he would have the Word of Christ dwell in them in all Wisdom; that they might see through all their Sophistry, might not be deceived by their artful Turns, but might know the Truth as it is in Jesus. As if he should say, Don't comply with their insinuating Suggestions; don't be imposed upon, or carried away by their specious Interpretations, but like wise Men observe where the Fallacy lies, and guard against it. Bring every Thing to the divine Standard, and be careful in your Enquiries into the Word of Christ, and into what they say about it, that you may have the right Meaning of it. Let that, and that only, be the Rule of your Faith and Obedience; and see that you understand your Rule. Take all Measures, and use all Means, that Christ has afforded you, with the utmost Diligence, that you may not be ignorant of it, nor mistaken about it.

YOU should frequently put the Question to your selves, as Philip did to the Eunuch, Un-Acts 8. 30, derstandest thou what thou readeest? To have the Word of Christ in your Hands, and in your  
S 3 Heads,



**SECT. XI.** *W* Heads, as *unsensed* Characters, which you don't understand the Meaning of, will be of no Advantage to you. The Use of Words is to convey Ideas; but if you have no Ideas under them, no Apprehensions of the Doctrines contain'd in them, they are of no more use to you than the learned Languages are to the *Barbarian*. And to have *false* Notions of Christ's Word in your Minds will misguide you, and may do you much more Harm than Good. For, as it will then lie in your Conceptions, it will be no longer the Word of Christ; but the Word of your own ill-turn'd Imagination, or the Word which either mistaken, or designing Men, have imposed upon you. As therefore you value the Glory of Christ, the Welfare of your own immortal Souls, and the Preservation of the Truth of the Gospel, in which both these are nearly concerned, lay out all your Wisdom in your Searches into it, that you may get, and be established in a true Acquaintance with it, according to Christ's own Meaning in it, and

Heb. 13.9. *may not be carried about with strange or unscriptural Doctrines.* Hence,

(2.) *It should dwell in us, in all Wisdom, to improve it to the practical Purposes for which Christ design'd it.*

THIS the Apostle strongly suggests in the remaining Part of the Verse, where he adds, *Teaching, and admonishing one another in Psalms and Hymns, and spiritual Songs, singing with Grace in your Hearts to the Lord.* As if he should say, Let the Word of Christ be wisely improved to spiritual Benefit, that your own Hearts may be seasoned with Grace by it, and that you may teach and admonish one another for good unto Edification.

DON'T

*understanding the Word of Christ.* 263

DON'T let the glorious Truths of the SER. XI. Gospel dwell in you, as a System of dry Speculations, or as general Rules and Maxims, without a particular Application of them for Use, as there may be Occasion: But consider what you find in the Scripture, as able to make you *wise to Salvation*, through Faith in Christ Jesus; and labour to *apply* it suitably to your selves for that Purpose. Don't be satisfy'd with any kind of Knowledge of it, that falls short of Wisdom to your own Salvation; lest, while you profess your selves to be wise, you really become Fools in Things of the utmost Moment and Consequence. For no Knowledge of divine Things can be of saving Advantage to you, unless it becomes subservient to Practice. *If ye know these Things, says Christ, happy are ye if ye do them.*

CONSIDER this Word, as sufficient to instruct you how to *behave your selves wisely in a* Psal. 101, *perfect Way*, and to *walk before God with a* 2. *perfect upright Heart*, that it may furnish you with Prudence to order your Thoughts and Ways, your Temper and Conduct in the whole Course of publick and private Life; and that you may know how to mix the Wisdom of the Serpent with the Innocence of the Dove. And consider it as the means of Establishment and Increase in all Grace and Holiness, in all Faith and Hope, Truth and Love, Peace and Joy, that you may *grow up into him in all Things*, Eph. 4.15, *who is the Head, even Christ*; and that so you may wisely improve it to the bringing forth Fruit, that shall abound to your own Account through him.

NOR should you confine your Knowledge of this Word of Christ to your selves; but let it dwell in all Wisdom in you to the *Good of*

*Ser. XI.* *others, teaching and admonishing them by it, that they may be enrich'd with the same Wisdom. Learn to know how to use it with good Judgment, in Maintenance and Defence of the Gospel of Christ, to the Confirmation of the Truth, and Confutation of Error, to the settling of them that are weak in the Faith, and to the silencing of Gainsayers. Get such a copious View, and such a well-digested Scheme of the whole Frame and Tendency of the Sacred Oracles, that you may be skilful in the Word of Righteousness, able in your several Stations, even as private Christians, to teach others. Let it dwell with such Wisdom in you, that you may know how, as proper Occasions offer, to speak a Word in Season, well adapted to instruct the Ignorant, to awaken the Stupid, to strengthen the Feeble, to recover the Backslider and Apostate, to encourage the trembling and dejected, and to satisfy the doubtful and wavering. Our Apostle speaks of himself in this Epistle, as practising this Kind of Wisdom in his Use of the*

*Col. 1. 28.* *Word of Christ, Whom, says he, we preach, warning every Man, and teaching every Man, in all Wisdom, that we may present every Man perfect in Christ Jesus. And he exhorts these Colossians to practise it towards others, in their*

*Chap. 4.* *ordinary Conversation, Walk in Wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the Time. Let your Speech be alway with Grace, seasoned with Salt, that ye may know how to answer every Man.*

THIS Knowledge of the Mind and Will of Christ in his Word; and this holy Skill to use it for our own and others spiritual Advantage, according to his gracious Intention in revealing it, is the most excellent Wisdom we are capable

pable of upon Earth. This far exceeds all SER. XI.  
the Wisdom of this World, and is the Earnest  
and Beginning of its exalted Enlargements,  
that we hope for in the shining Regions of  
Light above. This entertains, improves,  
adorns, regulates and satisfies all the Powers  
of rational and immortal Souls: It brightens  
and delights them: It raises the Dignity of  
Human Nature, opens the Springs of Peace  
and Pleasure, glorifies God, and scatters Bless-  
ings all around us: It spreads the Beauties  
of the divine Image upon us, fits us for Com-  
munion with the God of Light, and for the  
Society of the highest Ranks of intelligent Be-  
ings, and for a complete Enjoyment of the  
noblest of all intellectual Felicities; and it is  
Wisdom that won't die with us; but will out-  
live Time, and be carried into the upper  
World, to be continued, improved, and per-  
fected there, in the best manner for ever.

*The Second Part of Sermon XI.*

**I** Now proceed to,

2dly. *GIVE you some Directions to assist your Pursuits of this Wisdom.* And this I shall attempt with respect to *both* the Views I have given you of it. Therefore,

I. *WITH respect to the Wisdom of searching out the right Meaning of the Word of Christ, you may take the following Hints.*

(I.) *BEGIN all your Enquiries after it with earnest Prayer for the enlightning Influences of the Spirit of Truth.*

SOMETHING of this Kind has been suggested more than once in the Course of these  
Me-



**SER. XI.** Meditations ; but, as it is a Matter of vast Importance to my present Design, I could not omit some farther Thoughts about it. Without the Illuminations of the blessed Spirit, we shall wander in the Dark, mistake our Way, and never reach the desirable End. *For what Man knoweth the Things of a Man, save the Spirit of Man which is in him? Even so the Things of God knoweth no Man, but the Spirit of God.*

**1 Cor. 2. 11.** The Wisdom we want is call'd the *Wisdom that is from above* ; and if any Man lack Wisdom, he is bid to ask it of God, that giveth to all Men liberally, and upbraideth not ; and it shall be given him. But let him ask in Faith, nothing wavering.

To direct our Hearts this Way, and to encourage our Faith in asking, God the Father is called the *Father of Lights* ; Jesus Christ is represented as the great Prophet of the Church, who has all the *Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge* in him, and who hath not only revealed the great Things of God to us in his Word ; but opens the Understandings of his Disciples, that they may understand the Scriptures, and gives them an Understanding to know him : And the Holy Ghost is called the *Spirit of Truth*, and the *Spirit of Wisdom and Revelation in the Knowledge of Christ*, that the Eyes of our Understandings may be enlightened. Hence was the Apostle's Prayer for the Colossians, that they might be filled with the Knowledge of God's Will, in all Wisdom and spiritual Understanding. And when he had given the plainest Instructions to Timothy, and exhorted him to consider them, he referred him to God for a right understanding of them.

**2 Tim. 2. 7.** Consider what I say, and the Lord give thee Understanding in all Things.

*understanding the Word of Christ.* 267

AND though David had a Copy of the Law SER. XI.  
for his daily Reading and Meditation, accord-  
ing to God's Command concerning the Kings  
of Israel; *It shall be when he sitteth on the Throne* Deut. 17.  
*of his Kingdom, that he shall write him a Copy of* 18, 19.  
*this Law in a Book, out of that, which is before the*  
*Priests, the Levites: And it shall be with him,*  
*and he shall read therein all the Days of his Life;*  
and what a sacred Regard he had to this Com-  
mand may easily be gathered from the Pro-  
fessions he made of its being *his Delight*, and  
*his Meditation all the Day*: Yet he frequently  
made his Application to God in Prayer, to  
give him a right Understanding, and enlarged  
Knowledge of his Word; as every one knows  
that is but a little conversant with the Book  
of *Psalms*.

If therefore we would read the Scriptures  
to Advantage, and understand what we read,  
our Eye should be frequently up to him, *That*  
*teacheth to profit*. We should ask Counsel of  
the great Counsellor, and depend upon him to  
conduct our Minds in their Enquiries, and to  
set his Truths in a just and proper Light be-  
fore them. This added to what has been of-  
fer'd in preceeding Discourses, may suffice  
for the first Direction. The next shall be  
this.

(2.) LABOUR after a suitable Temper of Spi-  
rit in all your Searches into the Word of Christ.

THE Temper of the Mind is its main Bias;  
as that is form'd, the Judgment is apt to be  
sway'd by it. This Bias naturally lies on the  
wrong side, and is too often increased by some  
additional Weights; and its strong Propensi-  
ons another Way insensibly carry us off from  
the true Knowledge of the Word of Christ.  
A remarkable Instance of this we have in his  
own

SER. XI.

own Disciples, whose mistaken Notions, and fond Hopes about the external Glory of the Messiah's Kingdom, and whose rooted Prejudices against his abased and suffering Characters, had such a malignant Power over their Minds, that when he told them, in Terms as plain and determinate as Language could furnish, that he should be delivered to the Gentiles; and should be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they should scourge him, and put him to Death; and the third Day he should rise again; they understood none of these Things; and this Saying was hid from them, neither knew they the Things which were spoken. O the dreadful Power of false Prejudices to pervert the Mind, to throw off Evidence, and turn us away from it; so that we can't understand or yield to it, according to the most obvious Light in which it shines before us! There is therefore great need of a very strict and watchful Eye upon every Disposition of Heart, that tends to mislead us, or to darken the Truth and hide it from us. I will just point out a few of them, as they occur to my Thoughts, and they are these.

A LAZY, cold Indifference, whether we are right or wrong; or, whether we understand the Scripture or no: A Proneness to indulge a lively Fancy, and strong Imagination in interpreting it: Pride, and Self-sufficiency of Mind, as if we were able enough of our selves to search out the whole Meaning of Christ in his Word; or as if our own Reason was the just Standard of all Truth: Unthankfulness to God for the Light he has given us, and for the Advantage we have received by it: Fondness for Party-Principles, and for pre-conceived Opinions, as such, on one Hand;

Hand ; and Averſeneſs to them, only becauſe SER. XI.  
they are ſuch, on the other ; with a Reſolution  
rather to find them, or to find ſomething  
againſt them in the Bible, than to take our  
Sentiments of Divine Things from it, and to  
adjust them by it : Prejudices againſt the Pu-  
rity and Sublimity of the Truths of the Goſpel :  
A Rancour of Spirit againſt thoſe that differ  
from us : An unbelieving, irreverent, froward,  
captious Temper, with an Unwillingneſs to  
yield to the Light, and to receive Convictions,  
when they offer to our Minds : An Affectation  
of Knowledge, rather to furniſh us with Abi-  
lities for diſputing endleſſly, and to gratify the  
mean Ambition of puzzling and confounding  
others, than to praſtiſe what we know : The  
Love of Sin in all its alluring Forms, and all  
irregular Appetites, and baſe Affections to-  
ward this World, towards its Pleaſures or  
Profits, or toward the Eſteem, Honour, and  
Applauſes of Men. All theſe muſt be care-  
fully guarded againſt, and conſcientiouſly laid  
aſide, as Enemies to the Simplicity of the  
Truth as it is in Jeſus. As far as any of thoſe  
prevail in us, they will infeeble, darken, and  
pervert our Minds. They tend, in their own  
Nature, to hide the Truth of the Goſpel  
from us, and to turn us aſide from it. And if  
we give up our ſelves to them, and act under  
their Influence, in our Converſe with the  
Scripture, it is a righteous Thing with God to  
deliver us up to the Way of our own Choice,  
and to with-hold his enlightening Influences  
from us.

WE ſhould therefore *lay apart all this Fil-  
thineſs, and Superfluity of Naughtineſs,* that we  
may receive with Meekneſs the ingrafted Word ;  
and go to the Scriptures with an honeſt, up-  
right



**SER. XI.** right Love of the Truth, and earnest Desires that it may make *us free*. Seek the sincere Milk of the Word, [τὸ λογικὸν ἀδολον γάλα ἐπιποθέσθαι] as that which won't seduce the Judgment, or deceive the Appetites of a rational Nature. Seek it with Impartiality and Care, that you may receive it as Christ hath left it, and may grow thereby. Let all your Enquiries after his Mind and Will in it be carried on with steady Views to the great and worthy Ends of a supernatural Revelation, that you may have just and noble Sentiments of it, and may believe and practise every pure and exalted Doctrine and Duty you find recommended and enjoined by Joh. 7. 17. it; for he that doth so shall know of the Doctrine whether it be of God.

SEARCH the Scriptures with all Humbleness of Mind, under an affecting Consciousness of your own Darkeness, and Liableness to Mistake; of your depraved Indispositions for the Reception of divine Truths, of the entire Dependance of your Minds on God, and of your absolute Need of him for your Teacher. All our Prayers for a good Understanding of them are so many practical Acknowledgments of these, and they express the real Sense of our Hearts as to our Need of divine Illumination, or else they are all Mockery. If therefore we think it our Duty, as I hope we do, to implore divine Assurances for this purpose, we should keep up humble Dependances on the Lord for it, that, according to his Promise, *he would instruct, and teach us, — and guide us with his Eye.* Psa. 32. 8.

LET a holy Fear of God govern your Hearts, and run through all your Searches into his Word, that you may be frankly open to his Instructions, may be thankful for them, and

## *understanding the Word of Christ.* 271

and may subject your Consciences to his Authority, without reserve, in every Thing that is or shall be made known unto you by it. For *the Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will shew them his Covenant.* SER. XI.  
Psal. 25.  
14.

AND under all these Encouragements, let your Hope and Confidence be in him, that your Enquiries after the right Meaning of his Word shall not be in vain. For *he that handleth a Matter wisely* [חֲשֹׁבִית עַל דְּבָרֵי] *Or, he that wisely considereth the Word, shall find Good; and whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy is he.* Prov. 16.  
20. This Temper of Spirit will meet with the best Success.

(3.) BE careful to read and meditate on the Word of Christ with close Application of Mind.

MANY that bear the Name of Christians are almost Strangers to their Bibles. They seldom look into them, or at most, do but now and then hurry over a Chapter or two, without any serious Thought whether they understand what they read or no. And I wish that many real Christians, from whom better Things might be hoped, were not very faulty in this Matter. But frequent and attentive reading the Word, with Observation and Care, is a necessary Means of acquainting us with the Mind of Christ in it.

If therefore you would have a clear Understanding, an exact and extensive Knowledge of the Sense and Meaning of the Scripture, be very often conversant with it. Don't let a Day pass without gathering some Portions of this heavenly Manna. And if any of you are curious to know in what Space of Time the Scripture may be read through, by certain Portions every Day; the best Computation I can make stands thus: There are in the

**SER. XI.** *the Old Testament Seven Hundred Seventy Nine Chapters, and One Hundred and Fifty Psalms; and in the New Two Hundred and Sixty Chapters.* According to these Numbers, I find that *three* Chapters every Lord's Day, and *two* Chapters every Day besides, will (leaving out the *Psalms*) carry one through the *Old Testament* in a Year, with *three* Chapters to spare, that is, in a Year wanting one *Lord's Day*. *Five* Chapters a Week will carry one through the *New Testament* exactly in a Year. And, taking the *Chapters* and *Psalms*, as they come in course, *four* on the Lord's Days, and *three* every Day besides, will carry one through the whole Bible in a Year, with only the Remainder of Forty Two Chapters; which, reckoning *three* Chapters for each Day alike, will take up just a Fortnight more.

BUT besides the ordinary Course of reading and meditating upon the Scripture, set apart some longer Time, as it can be spared, for this Work; and take Pains to bend your Minds to a fixed Attention in it. Instead of confining your selves to one or two, or to any set Number of Chapters, read, as you have Opportunity, through the Subject treated of, that you may have a View of the whole at once. Read it over and over again, till your Mind is filled with it. And then examine its several Parts more particularly; every *Word* and *Sentence*, all the *Connections* that are between them, all the *Dependencies* they have upon, and all the *Relations* they bear unto each other; and observe, whether the Expressions the Scripture useth must, either from the Nature of the Things spoken of, or from the Circumstances of the Context, be taken in a *literal*,

*ral*, or in a *figurative* Sense; and whether its absolute and universal Terms are to be taken in a *wide* and unlimited, or in a *restrained* and qualified Sense. SER. XL.

WHEN the Apostle ordered any of *his Epistles* to be read to the Churches, as he did *this*, and some others (*Col. 4. 16. & 1 Thes. 5. 27.*) he, doubtless, did not intend that any such Epistle should be read by Piece-Meals, but the whole of it together, that they might take in its full Drift in all its Extent. And we can't reasonably suppose but they read it all at once; as any Church now would do, if one much less than an Apostle was to write to it a longer Letter, than most of his were, about some Affairs of the most concerning Consequence; and as we commonly do when we receive a Letter from a Correspondent or Friend.

MANY Mistakes are made about the Meaning of the Scripture, by Persons only dipping here and there into it, and taking up with the Sound of particular Words and Sentences, as if they stood for independent Ideas. But several of these Mistakes might easily be remedied by reading and observing all Things in their proper Order and Connection. For, though the Scriptures are not written in an artificial Method, according to the exact Rules of *Logick* or *Rhetorick*; yet, generally speaking, there is a natural Order, and an unaffected Connection in what they deliver to us: And this must be attended to, that we may understand them aright. Therefore, wheresoever we read in the Word of Christ, we should consider *who* speaks, *what* is spoken, to *whom*, and on what *Occasions* those Things were spoken, what is the main *Scope* and Design of the

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**SER. XI** Discourse, and *how* its several Parts look toward that Design. We should likewise observe, what *incidental* Truths are intermixed, *how* they are brought in, where they *begin*, and where they *end*.

AND while you are perusing any Part of Scripture, don't imagine that every Verse is an independent Sentence, or that every Chapter is a distinct Subject. For the *Chapters* and *Verses* are only a Contrivance of late Years for the Help of the Memory, and more ready finding any Part of Scripture, that we want to have recourse to; and as they now stand, many of the *Verses* begin and end in the middle of a Sentence, and most of the *Chapters* begin or end in the middle of the Subject treated upon. But its several Books were written by the sacred Penmen, as one continued Discourse, without those Separations, from the Beginning to the End; and as such we should consider them.

IF Darkness and Difficulty still remain upon the Face of some Passages, after we have with renewed Care read and meditated upon them in this manner, they may often receive Light from some other *parallel* Places, where the same Doctrine is discoursed of; and especially where 'tis treated more *professedly*, and at large. We should therefore seek an Understanding in the Scripture, by comparing one part of it with another, as the Apostle

1 Cor. 2.  
13. has shewn us the Way, *comparing spiritual Things with spiritual*. We should compare the Scriptures of the *Old Testament* with what the same Spirit has taught us in the *New*, and should compare one part of the *New* or *Old* with another, for the illustrating and confirming every Truth that lies before our Consideration.

ation. And in this Course of Search the *clear-est* Texts should be used to cast a Light upon, and give an Interpretation to those that are more obscure. *Prophecies* should be considered in the Light of their *Accomplishments*, and *Types* of their *Anti-Types*: And *metaphorical* Terms should be explain'd by those that are *proper*. The professed *Seat* of any Doctrine should be consulted to clear up incidental Passages, relating to that Doctrine in other Places. And the plain and *general* Doctrine of the Word of God, which I take to be what is commonly meant by the *Analogy of Faith*, should govern the Sense of doubtful Expressions, that they may not be construed into an Inconsistency with it, or Contradiction to it. Hence the Apostle, to guard against these false Teachers, that would pervert the plain Meaning of the Doctrine or Gospel of Christ, says, *Though we, or an Angel from Heaven, Gal. 1. preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which* 8, 9. *we have preached unto you; and — If any Man preach any other Gospel unto you, than that ye have received, from us the Apostles of Christ, speaking by his Authority, and under the Direction of his Spirit, let him be accursed. And where-ever the Holy Ghost himself has made a plain Interpretation of one part of his Word in another, we ought to receive it as infallibly true.*

BUT after all, it is to be supposed that you may meet with some insuperable Difficulties, arising from the *Peculiarities* of the *Ancient*, and particularly of the *Jewish* Manner of writing, which frequently ran into the *parabolical*, *figurative*, and *mystical* Strain; several Instances of which may put us to a non-plus, how familiar soever they might be to those, that

SER. XI. were Cotemporary with the sacred Penmen.

It seems to have been very proper, and well becoming the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that the Structure of the Scripture should comply with the Form and Stile of Speaking so generally used, especially in the *Eastern Nations*, through all the Periods in which it was writ; that both the inspired Writers, and those to whom they wrote, might be treated suitably to their *Genius*, and to the Weaknesses and Prejudices they labour'd under; and that the Scripture might bear the *genuine, obvious*, Marks of its true Antiquity in all succeeding Generations. For how uncouth wou'd it have appear'd to the People of those former Ages, wherein it was writ, had it been put into a Dress which they had been all along utter Strangers to, and never had any Taste for? How flat, how dry, and spiritless, would they have thought it, had it been stripped of these *strong and lively* Figures, some of which have an inimitable Force, Majesty, and Pathos, that can't be touch'd by the softer Language of our Age? How would some cutting Truths have shock'd them, had they been deliver'd in open Terms? And how would Infidels in after Times have triumph'd over its Claims to *Antiquity*, and consequently to a divine *Authority*, if there had been *no distinguishing* Agreement in its Genius with what appears to have been invariably proper to those Ages? I doubt this would have been made to serve a Turn against the Credit of the Scripture more plausibly, than the allegorical, mystick Stile, is now.

*understanding the Word of Christ.* 277

AND as to the *Obscurities*, in which some SER. XI.  
 Texts of this strain may lie before us, they  
 don't affect the *Essentials* of Christian Religi-  
 on: For either they relate to Things of *small*  
 Consequence; or if, to say the most, they  
 wrap up any *important* Doctrines in *Darkness*,  
 all the Advantages that could be expected  
 from them, in case we thoroughly understood  
 their Reference to those Doctrines, are suffi-  
 ciently provided for without them, by clear  
 Expressions, and literal Proofs of the same  
 Doctrines in other Places.

WE may therefore content our selves to  
 remain under Uncertainty, as to the particu-  
 lar Meaning of such obscure Passages, as we  
 have not sufficient Means to understand: We  
 should not be too fond of meer Conjectures  
 about them; nor should we lay too much  
 Stress one way or other upon them: And we  
 need not be ashamed to confess our Igno-  
 rance about them, nor to wait for further  
 Light, that may hereafter break out upon  
 them, perhaps, at the general Conversion of  
 the *Jews*. Though at present we may won-  
 der at, and not understand some of *Christ's Sayings*  
 in his Word; it may nevertheless be our Du-  
 ty, and in the Issue our Advantage, as it was  
 the Virgin *Mary's*, to *keep, and ponder them in* Luke 2.  
*our Hearts*. And if 'twill answer any valu- 18, 19, 50,  
 able Ends for us to be acquainted with them, 51.  
 we may very well hope, that as Christ said to  
 Peter in a particular Case, *What we know not* Joh. 13.  
*now, we shall know hereafter*. In the mean 7.  
 while, the careful reading and meditating on  
 the Word of Christ, that has been recom-  
 mended, is of vast Advantage to give us a true  
 Acquaintance with it, as far as it is needful  
 for us, or as we are capable of it. The Psal-



- SER. XI.** *mist speaks of this Meditation as the abounding Practice of the good and blessed Man: In his Law doth he meditate Day and Night. He likewise declares it was his own Practice, and that he found great Improvements of Knowledge by it: O how love I thy Law! It is my Meditation all the Day. Thou through thy Commandments has made me wiser than mine Enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers; for thy Testimonies are my Meditation. I understand more than the Ancients. The Prophet Daniel studied the sacred Writings then extant, and understood by Books, and particularly by that of Jeremiah the Prophet, the Mind of God about the Duration of Israel's Captivity. Christ's frequent Appeals to the Scripture, and to the Jews about it, in such Language as this, Search the Scripture: How is it written in the Law? How readest thou? Did you never read in the Scriptures? Have ye not read? and, Whoso readeth, let him understand, suggest that this is the proper Means of getting the right Knowledge of divine Things. The Apostle says, all that was written afore-time was written for our Learning. He put the Churches upon reading his own inspired Epistles; that, as he said to one of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- Pfal. 1. 2.** *his Law doth he meditate Day and Night. He likewise declares it was his own Practice, and that he found great Improvements of Knowledge by it: O how love I thy Law! It is my Meditation all the Day. Thou through thy Commandments has made me wiser than mine Enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers; for thy Testimonies are my Meditation. I understand more than the Ancients. The Prophet Daniel studied the sacred Writings then extant, and understood by Books, and particularly by that of Jeremiah the Prophet, the Mind of God about the Duration of Israel's Captivity. Christ's frequent Appeals to the Scripture, and to the Jews about it, in such Language as this, Search the Scripture: How is it written in the Law? How readest thou? Did you never read in the Scriptures? Have ye not read? and, Whoso readeth, let him understand, suggest that this is the proper Means of getting the right Knowledge of divine Things. The Apostle says, all that was written afore-time was written for our Learning. He put the Churches upon reading his own inspired Epistles; that, as he said to one of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- Pfal. 119. 97 — 100.** *Meditation all the Day. Thou through thy Commandments has made me wiser than mine Enemies; for they are ever with me. I have more Understanding than all my Teachers; for thy Testimonies are my Meditation. I understand more than the Ancients. The Prophet Daniel studied the sacred Writings then extant, and understood by Books, and particularly by that of Jeremiah the Prophet, the Mind of God about the Duration of Israel's Captivity. Christ's frequent Appeals to the Scripture, and to the Jews about it, in such Language as this, Search the Scripture: How is it written in the Law? How readest thou? Did you never read in the Scriptures? Have ye not read? and, Whoso readeth, let him understand, suggest that this is the proper Means of getting the right Knowledge of divine Things. The Apostle says, all that was written afore-time was written for our Learning. He put the Churches upon reading his own inspired Epistles; that, as he said to one of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- Dan. 9. 2.** *cred Writings then extant, and understood by Books, and particularly by that of Jeremiah the Prophet, the Mind of God about the Duration of Israel's Captivity. Christ's frequent Appeals to the Scripture, and to the Jews about it, in such Language as this, Search the Scripture: How is it written in the Law? How readest thou? Did you never read in the Scriptures? Have ye not read? and, Whoso readeth, let him understand, suggest that this is the proper Means of getting the right Knowledge of divine Things. The Apostle says, all that was written afore-time was written for our Learning. He put the Churches upon reading his own inspired Epistles; that, as he said to one of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- Rom. 15. 4.** *was written afore-time was written for our Learning. He put the Churches upon reading his own inspired Epistles; that, as he said to one of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- Eph. 3. 4.** *of them, when they read, they might thereby understand his Knowledge in the Mysteries of Christ. And he directed Timothy to Reading and Meditation, for his Improvement in spiritual Understanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*
- 1 Tim. 4. 13, 15.** *derstanding: Give Attendance to Reading — meditate upon these Things, give thy self wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear to all.*

(4.) MAKE use of all other Helps, according to your Opportunities and Capacities, for understanding the Word of Christ.

*understanding the Word of Christ.* 279

MEN of Letters, who are acquainted with SER. XI.  
the *original Languages*, in which the Scriptures  
were written; with *Grammar, Rhetorick*, and  
the *just Laws of Thinking*; with *antient History*,  
*Chronology* and *Geography*, and with the various  
Kinds of *Antiquity* relating to the *Laws*, the  
Customs, the Opinions, the Manners of the  
*Jews*, of the *Heathens* round about them, of  
the *Christian Church* in its earliest Days, and of  
the several *Seets* that arose before the Canon  
of Scripture was finished, may gather a great  
deal of Light from thence for understanding  
many Passages of holy Writ, which otherwise  
would remain under unsearchable Darknes.  
But this Furniture lies out of the Sphere of  
the greatest Number of Christians: And blef-  
sed be God, that the Knowledge of the neces-  
sary, saving, and most useful Truths of the  
Bible, as 'tis translated into our own Lan-  
guage, don't depend upon these Attainments.  
These Truths may easily be gather'd, under  
the foregoing Directions, from the Scripture it  
self: And yet there are other Helps, which  
lie level with the Capacities of illiterate Chri-  
stians as well as others, that may be of use to  
enlarge those Capacities, and to regulate,  
brighten, and extend their Apprehensions of  
sacred Truth. For though the Words of Men  
can't express the Things of God in properer  
Terms, than his Word has expressed them by;  
yet the Nature of Language supposes that Ex-  
plications may be given of some Expressions,  
as they contain complex Ideas, which shall set  
their Meaning in an easier Light than they ap-  
pear'd in before.

MAKE use therefore of all the external  
Assistances you can get for this Purpose, that  
are suited to the Size of your own Capacities,

**SER. XI.** whether large or small ; such as diligent hearing the Word preached, reading the useful Writings of others, who in that way have laboured in the Word and Doctrine, conversing with Ministers, and other sober, judicious Christians, that you may either get Light from what they say to you, or may have your own Ideas awakened and improved by the labour of your Minds to convey your own Sentiments to them. Only take care that you don't plunge beyond your Depth, by puzzling your selves, or suffering others to puzzle you, with plausible Representations of Things, which you find are either too high in their own Nature, or too artful, intricate, and perplexing, in the Colours that are put upon them, for your Capacities to examine or judge about them.

It is a great piece of Wisdom to know the Strength of your Judgments, what they are qualified to be employ'd about, and how far you may venture in your Enquiries or Debates, without sensible Danger of unsettling and cooling your Minds as to all Religion ; or of losing the Power and Advantage of any important Truths, of which you are well assured upon clear Evidence, and which have had the happiest Influence upon your Esteem and Practice of real Godliness in Heart and Life. Labour therefore to learn the Measure of your Understandings, what they may be capable of, and by what sort of Helps they are most likely to improve ; make Choice especially of such Helps ; as you use them, consider what Evidence there is of Truth and Goodness in them ; and proportion your Esteem of them to the plain, consistent, and profitable Light, in which they set the Word of Christ before your Minds.

( You

# understanding the Word of Christ. 281

You should first consider the Scripture it  
 self, before you consult others Comments up-  
 on it; that you may judge of them by the  
 Scripture, and not of the Scripture by them.  
 And having thus fix'd the Rule of Judgment,  
 you should neither abound in your own Sense,  
 as if you had no need of Assistance from others,  
 or as if none but your own Sentiments were  
 right; nor should you sacrifice your Under-  
 standings to any Man, or to any Number or  
 Party of Men. You should neither reject  
 what you have Evidence for, and so have  
 made your own, though you at first received  
 it by Education or Instruction from others,  
 nor depend on their Opinion or Authority,  
 so as to take what they say upon Trust; but  
 should judge for your selves, according to  
 the Ability God has given you, as the Apo-  
 stle directed the *Corinthians*, *Judge in your* 1 Cor. 10.  
*selves, and judge ye what I say.* And Christ 15. & 11.  
 reprov'd the common People for neglecting 13.  
 this Duty: *Why even of your selves judge ye not* Luke 12.  
*what is right?* Have a care that no Man mis- 57.  
 lead you; or impose upon your Understand-  
 ing by *cunning Craftiness*, by *enticing Words*, or Eph. 4.  
 by false *Philosophy and vain Deceit*, on one 14.  
 Hand; and watch against Prepossessions, that Col. 2.  
 would shut out proper Light and Evidence on 4, 8.  
 the other. *The wise Man's Eyes are in his* Eccles. 3.  
*Head; but the Fool walks in Darknesh.* Take heed 14.  
*therefore that the Light which is in thee be not* Luke 11.  
*Darknesh.* Examine all by the Word of God, 35.  
*with all Readiness of Mind*, like the noble Be- Acts 17.  
*reans*, that you may see with your own Eyes, 11.  
 whether your own Notions about it, or what  
 is offer'd to assist your understanding of its  
 Meaning, be according to it or no. In this  
 way carefully prove all Things; hold fast that 1 Thes.  
 which 5. 21, 22.

SER. XI.



**SER. XI.** *which is good ; and abstain from all Appearance of Evil. And remember, that no other Man can answer for you in the Day of Judgment :*

**Rom. 14.** *But every one of us shall give Account of himself to God.*

A MODEST, sober, free, and Christian-like Conversation about the Word of Christ with Meekness and Love, for the Manifestation of the Truth to our own and others Consciences, may, by the Blessing of God, be of great Advantage to strike a Light upon the Minds of those that had but dark Apprehensions, or were under great Mistakes before. Christ's Disciples increased in the Knowledge of the Scriptures by their private Conversation with him. The Elders of *Ephesus* found the Benefit of the Apostle *Paul's* private Conversation, when he *taught them from House to House*, as well as *publickly*. *Apollos*, an eloquent Man, and mighty in the Scriptures, knew the way of **Acts 20.** *God more perfectly* by his private Conversation with *Aquila* and *Priscilla*. And that Knowledge of the holy Scriptures, which *Timothy* had in his younger Days, seems to have been chiefly owing, under God, to his *Mother's* Instructions. Which, by the Way, deserves to be taken Notice of by Christian Parents, **Acts 18.** *that they may begin very early to bring up their Children in the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord.*

THIS Christian Conversation, managed with Prudence and Temper about divine Things, is highly pleasing to God, and profitable to our selves. *They that feared the Lord* **Mal. 3.** *spake often one to another ; and the Lord hearkened and heard, and a Book of Remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his Name. And they shall be*

be mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in the Day SER. XI.  
when I make up my Jewels, and I will spare  
them as a Man spareth his Son that serveth  
him.

THUS while we busy our selves in these  
several Methods, running to and fro in the use  
of all proper Means, we have reason to hope  
that Knowledge shall be increased, as is prophe- Dan. 12. 4.  
sied of the last Days.

### The Third Part of Sermon XI.

2. **G**IVE me leave now to add a few Di-  
rections with respect to the Wisdom  
of improving the Word of Christ to the practical  
Purposes for which it is designed.

THIS is of still higher Concern to us. For,  
whatever Light we have about the Mind and  
Will of Christ in his Word, what will it pro-  
fit us, if it has not a prevailing Influence to  
lead us into the Way of Salvation by him, and  
to cleanse us from all Filthiness of the Flesh and  
Spirit, that we may neither retain the Tem-  
per of the Brute nor of the Devil? And as  
much more is required to give divine Truths  
this Influence upon us, than to form our No-  
tions of them; so we should be still more so-  
licitously careful and desirous to be acquainted  
with the proper Methods of improving them  
to this Purpose.

ALL the foregoing Directions are of great  
use for the Attainment of Wisdom in this Con-  
sideration of it, as well as in that to which  
they have been applied. All our Aims at  
Wisdom, to improve the Word of Christ unto  
Practice, should be attended with fervent  
Prayer, with a becoming Temper of Spirit,  
with careful Reading, and Meditation on the  
Word,

**SER. XI.** Word, and with the Use of all other outward Means, that are proper in their own Nature, or by the Institution of Christ, to impress it upon us, and to make us skilful in improving it to practical Advantage. I shall therefore but briefly add a few more.

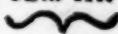
(1.) *IN all your Converse with the Scriptures set your Aim at spiritual, vital Improvements by them.*

**STUDY** the Scriptures with this principal View, that you may be enlightened in the *saving* Knowledge of the whole Will of God, and that you may come under their Power to convince, convert, sanctify, strengthen, support, comfort, and establish you; as your States and Circumstances may call for those respective Benefits.

**READ**, meditate, and hear, that your Souls may live by the Faith of the Operation of God; that you may be lively in the Exercise of that, and every other Grace, may live above this World, have your Conversation in Heaven, and advance in all active Dispositions against every Sin, and to every part of your Duty toward him, and others, and your selves.

Phil. 1.  
9, 10.

**TAKE** Notice with what Wisdom and Grace Christ speaks in his Word; with what holy Affections the inspired Penmen wrote it, and what Affections they would kindle in you, that *your Love may abound in all Knowledge and Judgment, that you may approve the Things that are excellent*, and that you may have a spiritual Feeling, and the tenderest Emotions in your Souls, by what they say about spiritual and eternal Things. Observe their Drift to make you wise, holy, and happy, that you may be cast into the Mould of their Doctrine, may  
drink

drink into the same Spirit with them, and SER. XI.  
may shine as Lights in the World. 

IF the great Apostle was concern'd, *Left* 1 Cor. 9.  
*that by any means, whilst he preached to others, he* 27.  
*himself should be a Cast-away:* Surely we have  
need to take the utmost Care, lest while we are  
searching into the Meaning of the Scripture,  
we should take up with a *spiritless* Religion,  
that has nothing vital in it, and we our selves  
should miscarry, and fall short of Heaven  
at last.

(2.) CAREFULLY *observe what you find of*  
*Christ in his Word, that he may dwell in your*  
*Hearts by Faith.*

THE more distinct, enlarged, and realizing  
Acquaintance you have with him, and the  
more your Souls fall in with the Discoveries  
you find of him, the more you will learn to  
profit by his Word. If you thoroughly *learn*  
*Christ*, that will make every other useful Les-  
son easy to you; it will secure you from *fatal*  
Errors, will shape your religious Sentiments,  
and give you a true Relish of every part of his  
Word, as far as you understand his Mind and  
Will in it. It will lead you into just Views of  
the different Nature of the *two Covenants*, and  
put you in the way to make a right use of both  
the *Law* and *Gospel*. It will direct you how to  
give every Scripture Doctrine its due propor-  
tionate Weight, and how to apply it in its pro-  
per Place and Order, for the Advancement of  
Gospel Peace and Holiness unto final Salvation.  
In a Word, it will make the Bible your De-  
light, and will have a happy Influence to ex-  
cite and regulate your Pursuits of the whole  
Compass of real Religion, in such a manner  
as may be most acceptable to God, and suc-  
cessful to your selves. If ever Christian Re-  
ligion



**SER. XI.** *ligion thrives in your Souls, you must grow up in all Things into Christ; must begin and end with him, whose Grace is sufficient for you.*  
 Eph. 4. 15.  
 2 Cor. 12.  
 9. Remember that the Scriptures are the *Word of Christ*; and let that lead you to consult them with diligent Observation of what they say concerning *him*, according to what has been already urged upon that Head.

(3.) PROVIDE *your selves with some general Principles of Christ's Word, that may always be familiar to you, and may habitually govern you in the whole Conduct of Life.*

SOME of its Principles are so easy to be remembered, and competently understood, so extensively directive in most Occurrences to all sorts of Persons, learn'd and unlearn'd, and so capable of being applied by sudden Reflection upon them, when we have not Time to deliberate; that 'tis of vast Advantage to the Life of Godliness to have them often proffering themselves to our Minds. For a Specimen of these you may take the following Instances.

WITH respect to the Duty we immediately owe to God; *The Lord our God is one Lord.*  
 Mark 12. 29, 30. *And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine Heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind, and with all thy Strength.* With respect to the Duty we owe to others; *Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thy self.*  
 Ver. 31. *And all Things whatsoever ye would that Men should do to you, do ye even so to them.* With respect to the Duty we owe to our selves, as to the due Government of our Passions, bodily Appetites, Words and Actions: *Let your Moderation be known unto all Men.*  
 Phil. 4. 5. *And with respect to the evangelical Turn that should be given to all these; as to the divine Authority in Obedience to which you*

you do them, as to the Spring of your Strength for them, as to the Ground of your Acceptance in them, and as to the End for which you perform them, *Whatsoever ye do in Col. 3. 17. Word or Deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving Thanks to God, and the Father by him.*

MANY other general Maxims akin to these may be easily collected for daily Use, that we may have them always at Hand, and act under their Light and Influence, by the naturalized Reflections of our Thoughts upon them on all Occasions. Happy Christians that have them ingrafted in their Souls, and turned into governing Principles of Conduct there!

(4.) IN all Cases of Darknefs, Doubts, and Difficulties, of a moral and spiritual Nature, consult the Word of Christ for suitable Direction and Relief.

It is to be expected, that many Cases should come before us in the Course of Life, in which we may be at a loss to know what to do, and which require more explicate and determinate Guidance than any general Rules can afford. But all the Diversities of our spiritual and moral Concerns are in a very particular manner provided for in the Scriptures. They are the only Revelation we have of the Mind and Will of God about them, beyond what he has given in the low Remains of natural Light; and there is such a Fulness in them, that whatever our Case is, some suitable Word may be found for our Direction and Relief.

THERE we may meet with Light to scatter our Darknefs, a Solution of our perplexing Doubts, and an Encouragement under all our Difficulties, as far as is needful for us, relating

**SER. XI.** ting to all Doctrines and Duties, Hopes and Fears, Sorrows and Comforts; relating to our State toward God, and the Way we should take before him. They are a Touch-stone of Truth, a Rule of Duty, a Charter of Privileges and Obligations, and a Conveyance of Grace and Comforts; and when we are under any Doubts or Darknes with respect to any of these, we should go to this Standard of them all, that we may try, and prove them, and may have them well adjusted in our selves. A Thousand Perplexities may roll in upon our Minds to an overwhelming, unless we go to the Word of God, as *Asaph* did to his Sanctuary, that we may be eased of them. *I am a Stranger in the Earth, says David, hide not thy Commandments from me. And, Unless thy Law had been my Delight, I should then have perished in mine Affliction.*

*Psal. 119.*  
*19, 92.*

HAVE not many of us found remarkable Help from Christ's Word in some Seasons of our greatest Darknes and Difficulties? Has it not been a Light to our Eyes, a Directory to our Feet, a seasonable Hint in a Time of Temptation, and in a doubtful Way; a healing Balm to our Wounds, a Cordial to our drooping Spirits, and the Strength and Joy of our Hearts? *Whither then should we go in the Returns of like Cases, but to the Word of Christ; or, in the Language of his Disciples,* *Joh. 6.68.* *to Christ himself, Who hath the Words of eternal Life?* The more we are acquainted with his Word, and apply to him according to it, the more Instruction, Assistance and Relief, we shall ordinarily find by it.

(5.) BE ready to receive the Word of Christ in all that it speaks to you.

WHATEVER it speaks suitable to the Circumstances of your Case, ought, as has been shewn at large, to be applied to your selves, and therefore you should be *ready* in the Disposition of your Hearts to take what it says of that kind to your selves. Don't put it away from you, as if it does not concern you: Don't heedlessly over-look it, nor unfaithfully evade it, nor unreasonably object against it, as if it belongs not to you: And don't unfairly object against your selves, as if you ought not to receive the glad Tidings of the Gospel, only because you are unworthy to share in any Benefit by it; but let Faith make every seasonable Word your own. Have a care of being *slow of Heart to believe* what Christ says in his Word to you: Don't be *backward* to learn by it, or to observe it: And don't be *shy* of falling under Conviction from it on one Hand, or of admitting the Comfort of it on the other; but be *willing* to stand directed and obliged, reprov'd or encouraged by it, as the Word of Christ to you, as far as it relates to one in your Condition. Let the Language of your Heart be like that of *Samuel, Speak, Lord,* 1 Sam. 3. 9. *for thy Servant heareth.* Don't refuse his Counsel, or his Comforts, in his Word; but *have respect to all his Commandments*, and say with the royal Psalmist, *I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak Peace to his People, and to his Saints; but let them not turn again to Folly.* To conclude,

(6.) SET a special Mark upon such Words of Christ, as you experience to be of singular Advantage to you.

IF at any Time you find some peculiar Assistance, Encouragement, Counsel, Satisfaction, or Hope, conveyed to you by some



**Sec. XI.** particular Words of Christ: If they have been set home with Evidence, Power, Sweetness, and Influence, upon your Heart; or been any way of signal Use to you, put a special Mark upon them, that you may

**Psal. 119. 93.** say with David, *I will never forget thy Precepts; for with them thou hast quickened me.*

Treasure up such Experiences for future Use; often review them; and if you find your self apt to forget them, or to lose their Impressions, or to call into Question afterwards, what you once experienced by them, write them down, with the Exercises of your Heart about them, while they are fresh in your Memory, that you may have Recourse to them, if ever the like Darknes or Difficulty

**Job 29. 3.** return upon you; and may remember how by *his Light you walked through Darknes.*

A REVIEW of what you saw, and felt, and was influenced unto, by means of such Words, may be of use to strengthen you in an Hour of Temptation, and to revive something of past Impressions. The same Spirit that breath'd in those Words formerly, may breath in them again; and if you don't find an equal Effect of them upon you, as you have done, a clear Remembrance of what you once experienced, may be a Support to you, when all other Comforts fail; and may put an Argument into your Mouth to plead with God, and to countenance Faith and Hope in your

**Psal. 119. 49.** Pleadings with him, that he would remember *his Word unto you, on which he hath caused you to hope, as David did.* And thereupon he im-

**Ver. 50.** mediately adds, *This is my Comfort in my Affliction;*

**Ver. 52, 54.** *for thy Word hath quickened me. — I remembered thy Judgments of old, O Lord, and have comforted my self. — Thy Statutes have been*

been my Songs in the House of my Pilgrimage. Sua. XI.  
*Asaph* likewise found the Benefit of such sort of Reflections, in a Time of the greatest Darkneſs and Diſtruſt, as if God's Promiſes Pſal. 77. would fail for evermore, and he had forgotten to be 8 — 11. gracious, and in Anger had ſhut up his tender Mercies; I ſaid this is mine Infirmity; but I will remember the Tears of the right Hand of the moſt High; I will remember the Works of the Lord; ſurely I will remember thy Wonders of old. And when you have been enabled, upon clear Grounds, to claim an Inter-eſt in any of God's Promiſes, you may afterwards, upon the Remembrance of it, humbly urge him with his own Word, as *Jacob* did, *Thou ſaid'ſt I will ſurely do thee* Gen. 32. Good. 12.

If any Word of Chriſt has been eminently ſerviceable to ſupport and aſſiſt you in any ſpiritual Conflicts, to guard you againſt any Temptation, to work your Heart up to the Exerciſe of any ſeaſonable Graces in Times of ſpecial need, to warn and fortify you againſt any Sin, to bind any Duty upon your Conſcience, to excite or ſtrengthen any holy Reſolutions in you, or to animate you to any good Work: Remember ſuch Paſſages for after Uſe in the Returns of like Occaſions, as *David* Pſal. 119. hid God's Word in his Heart, that he might not ſin 11. againſt him. And in a Review of ſome Tranſactions that had paſſed between God and his Soul, he made theſe Reflections, *I have ſaid that* Ver. 57, *I would keep thy Words — I thought on my Ways,* 59, 60. *and turned my Feet unto thy Teſtimonies. I made haſte, and delayed not, to keep thy Commandments.*

THUS I have offered ſome Directions with reſpect to this Wiſdom, with which the Word of Chriſt ſhould dwell in us. May the bleſſed Spi-

**SER. XI.** Spirit teach you to profit by them. May he write them all in your Hearts, as far as they are pleasing in his Sight. And may he enable you so to turn them into daily Practice, that you may have all Wisdom to understand the Word of Christ, and to improve it to the saving Benefit of your own Souls, and, as far as possible, of the Souls of others.

## F I N I S.



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